The business of teaching: Vocational educators' experiences of marketization reforms

Patrick Anthony Locke

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Social Policy
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

The University of Sydney
2020

Statement of originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

PATRICK ANTHONY LOCKE

March 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The author would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the

traditional owners of the land on which The University of Sydney

now stands, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

It is on their ancestral lands that this research was conceptualised,

undertaken and written.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how public sector teachers experience marketization reforms. Many of the principles embedded within these neoliberal reforms appear to be antithetical to the traditional values of the educational field. Thus, the imposition of these changes is met with hostility, disparagement and resistance. This thesis aims to examine this policy enactment process, in which long-term public educators are charged with enacting neoliberal government policy. Vocational education is the object of the research, as one of the primary 'testing grounds' for neoliberal policy reform in the Australian context.

Previous research has mapped the macro-level economic impacts of marketization on the sector, as well as examining policy documents to 'read off' the impacts on the educators within it. However, there is a limited amount of research that gathers and foregrounds the perspectives of educators actually undergoing marketization reforms. As such the current project aimed to utilise a mixed-methods approach to provide a space for teachers to identify their concerns with, and explain their experiences of, marketization reforms.

The thesis draws on Bourdieu's field theory and Legitimation Code Theory to analyse documentary, survey and interview data. This data is used to construct a broad understanding of responses to reforms across the field, before focusing in on the three case study areas of the research: nursing, trades and hospitality.

The study demonstrates how teachers in different areas of the field characterize marketization reforms in very different ways, effecting their ability to adapt to new ways of working. Teachers appeared to draw on their experiences from their associated industry in order to interpret and evaluate reforms, suggesting that the dual-identity of teachers in vocational education was an important factor in how they responded to changes.

These findings support further research on vocational educators' construction of this dual identity and on their experiences of change in the sector, to better inform both research into marketization reforms and the practicalities of enacting policy in the sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The LCT community, both in Sydney and globally, have been a huge motivator and source of support. While the biennial conferences have helped me develop my understanding of the theory and education more widely, it is the regular sense of community at roundtables, workshops and 'S-club' that have kept me motivated throughout the PhD process. A special thanks must go the 'OG' reading group, Elena, Sharon and Kirstin, for the copious amount of feedback, festivities and fun over the years!

Finally, I want to thank Karl, my PhD supervisor. Karl has provided invaluable support in developing this thesis throughout my candidature, offering me opportunities to grow as a writer, teacher and academic. Whenever I had doubts about my work, knowing I had Karl in my corner was a huge source of confidence. Moreover, he has provided guidance and advice that I will take beyond this candidature and apply throughout my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Economic ways of thinking have gained a firm foothold in the educational field, and appear to be growing in force. Whether it be test-based accountability in primary schooling, the introduction of performance-pay mechanisms for high school teachers or the increasing casualisation of the higher education workforce, the evidence of the gradual encroachment of economic thinking is visible across educational sectors. These logics now underpin many of the decisions made within education; economic viability dictates class sizes, profitability directs marketing efforts and standardised testing determines pedagogy. It is not simply that these economic logics are being introduced alongside traditional educational goals, they are actively in competition with them. When education is evaluated in terms of its perceived economic benefits, many of the traditional principles of the sector are sidelined; while a love of learning is an 'intrinsic good' in education, its value as an economic good is negligible. This introduction of markets and price mechanisms to the field fundamentally challenges many of the moral and pro-social motivations of education, as they are crowded out by these competing sets of values. Contemporary educational fields are in a state of flux, as these two values systems compete for dominance.

Educators working within the field are the eyewitnesses to this struggle. For many teachers who belief in the values and ethos of public education as an important aspect of an egalitarian society, creeping economic rationalism is not simply a shift in the field, but a direct challenge to their beliefs about education. These teachers were drawn to working in the sector as they understood the inherent and moral benefits of education to society, which they perceive as antithetical to these economic ways of thinking. It is unsurprising that they feel out of place in a sector where 'students' are now 'clients', 'teachers' are now 'training facilitators' and 'holistic education' has been replaced by 'efficiently achieving learning outcomes'. This leads to the central question of this research thesis: how do public sector teachers conceptualise and manage potentially conflicting reforms?

1.2   NEOLIBERALISM WITHIN EDUCATION

The proliferation of economic ways of thinking into different fields in society has become an increasingly common phenomenon across a range of global contexts and fields. While this shift is regularly referred to as neoliberalism, a range of terminology is used to describe the reforms that implement it, including 'marketization' (Kwong, 2000), 'consumerism' (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2007), 'economic rationalism' (Grenfell & James, 2004) and 'New Public Management' (Hoggett, 1996). Despite this diversity of terminology these reforms are based on a common set of underpinning values and premises that are applied across these diverse contexts. They embody a stringent belief in the power of the 'invisible hand' of the market to serve the needs of society, resultant from this, it aims to make existing markets wider and create markets where they previously did not exist (R. Connell, 2014). On a global scale this results in a belief in the inherent benefits of economic and financial globalization, with economic growth being the overriding government goal (Cahill & Konings, 2017; Stiglitz, 2002). From this standpoint, big government, taxation and the welfare state are projected as restraining this capability of the market, and thus limiting for a nation's economic competitiveness. These changes are intertwined with other societal shifts, such as globalisation and industrial restructuring, with market forces being framed as solutions to these issues. Ultimately these tenets have resulted in increased deregulation, privatisation and the withdrawal of the state from many areas of service provision (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism's cynicism of the role of government is extended towards their conception of public sector workers. The motivations of these public servants are challenged, instead of being understood as altruistic agents of public good, they were reconceptualised as self-interested individuals who needed to be monitored and managed into serving the public (Le Grand, 2003). This results in public servants being increasingly surveilled with their practices quantified and assessed to ensure they are adequately performing their role for the state.

The educational field has not been immune to the promises of neoliberalism. The logics of the market have been increasingly incorporated in all educational sectors within Australia (R. Connell, 2013; Marginson, 1997). However, previous to these reforms the educational field had developed its own principles and ways of working that were firmly engrained in the sector. During the post-war period, Western nations embraced liberal-humanist conceptions of education, incorporating these philosophies into rapidly expanding education systems (Trow, 2010). Liberal-humanist forms of education valorise education as a goal in and of

itself, framing it as vital to living the 'good life' rather than simply for making a 'good living' (Moore, 1987). In order to achieve this 'good life', there is a focus on general and defuse objectives such as developing 'character' and citizenship, realising 'inner potential' and 'liberationary aims' of anti-sexist and anti-racist education (Hickox & Moore, 1995). This necessitates a broad understanding of the teacher as being concerned with the moral and spiritual development of the whole person, rather than simply imparting narrow skills and knowledge. To enable teachers to do this, liberal-humanist notions support a high degree of professional autonomy for teachers, educationalists and educational institutions, to ensure that educational goals, rather than utilitarian concerns, remain the focus.

The principles of neoliberal reforms appear to be strange bedfellows with the traditional values of the educational field. Instead of valuing education as an end in and of itself, it is understood as having value in upgrading the human capital of the nation, allowing them to better compete in the market. In lieu of focusing on broadly developing the whole student as a holistic and active citizen, education is reconceptualised as providing students with targeted skills and competencies, so they can achieve defined job-functions. Rather than having faith in teachers' pedagogic ability to tailor education to students' needs by safeguarding classroom autonomy, teachers are treated with suspicion, with efforts made to monitor their practice and ensure their compliance. The antithetical nature of these two sets of values would appear to make education fallow ground for neoliberal reforms, nevertheless they have become a common occurrence in a range of global contexts. This leads to the question of how this process of adopting and negotiating neoliberal reforms in education plays out within the field. Particularly as many of the agents within the field have been inculcated with liberal humanist understandings of education, and the emancipatory power of public education specifically. The incorporation of principles that seem diametrically opposed to these would appear to create a dilemma for these agents. This thesis aims to explore this dilemma, by investigating how these agents conceive of, negotiate and respond to this type of contemporary educational reform.

In a local context, neoliberal reforms have become a regular feature of the Australian public service. They have a substantial history in Australia, with Robertson and Woock (1989, p. 4) describing Australia in the 1980s as a 'laboratory of New Right experimentation', with Pusey (1991) mapping the spread of hegemonic market ideology in the Australian political sphere. This change is evident across Australia's education system. The childcare system was

restructured in the early 2000s to shift funding from community-based local cooperatives to for-profit providers (Brennan, 2002). At the school level it emerges through discourses of increasing 'choice' for parents; promoting competition among schools for students, marks and money; and providing more support for the private school sector (Campbell, 2009; R. Connell, 2013). Within higher education the reintroduction of fees in 1989 preceded a shift in the sector towards promoting consumerism and increasing stratification (Currie & Vidovich, 2000; Marginson, 1997). The vocational education system provides a contemporary example of these shifts, with national reforms instigated in 2009 directing states to 'open up' their vocational education sectors to the market. Within New South Wales (NSW), this was operationalised through the 2015 *Smart and Skilled* reforms which created an individual student entitlement (i.e. a voucher-based system) in which students could choose a provider to attend from within the vocational education market.

Vocational education has a substantial history of being permeated by marketization reforms. The vocational education and training (VET) sector has been a regular target for government reform, as it lacks autonomy from external influences. Rubenson and Elfert (2019) characterize the sector as a weak field due to it being 'deeply interwoven with neighbouring fields' (Vauchez, 2011, p. 342), lacking a central focus in terms of identity and being too entangled with the field of politics. Its relative lack of autonomy is often contrasted in the literature to that of higher education, which is used as illustrative of a field more impervious to external influence (Billett, 2014; Jamieson & Naidoo, 2004; Wheelahan, 2015). The prevalence of historical, elite institutions and the tradition of autonomy in academic freedom are pinpointed as factors that provide this increased insulation for the higher education sector (Jamieson & Naidoo, 2004; Tomlinson, 2017). This process is reinforced, as in many of these contexts the policymakers and decision makers involved in regulating the sector rarely have experience of vocational education (Billett, 2011). Moreover, as vocational education often services constituents from lower socio-economic status backgrounds, it is treated as less 'sacrosanct' when reforms within education are being enacted (Wheelahan, 2015). This resulted in it being dubbed the Cinderella of the education sector in that it was 'unplanned, inadequately financed and looked on without enthusiasm' (W. F. Connell, 1980, p. 50). This has led to the phenomena of governments using vocational education as a 'lab' to 'trial' marketization reforms before they are implemented in the wider educational field (Fisher, 2009, p. 20). As a result of this, vocational education in NSW has a long history of reform within the sector.

A distinguishing feature of the VET field is its comparative diversity to other educational sectors. The field has been described as fragmented due to the wide variety of areas taught, and correspondingly the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the teachers working within it (Grollmann, 2008; Köpsén, 2014; Tyler & Dymock, 2017). Due to teachers in the sector 'facing both ways' towards their pedagogic skill and occupational expertise, teachers are argued to draw on the values and experiences of their specific industry to inform their understanding of education (Bailly, 2012; Barnett, 2006; Colley, James, Diment, & Tedder, 2003). For example, the values, behaviours and ways of working of teachers in service industries and those teaching industrial trades have been demonstrated to contrast substantially (E. Smith & Teicher, 2017). This diversity is also evident in the student makeup of vocational education, with qualitative study emphasising that VET caters to 'early school leavers, young people who are alienated and disengaged from education, refugees and migrants with little English, adults from disadvantaged backgrounds, apprentices and trainees, highly skilled workers seeking updated qualifications and those looking for career changes' (Doughney, 2000, p. 22). Sometimes these categories of students overlap and sometimes they do so in the same program and the same classroom or learning site (Wheelahan, 2010). Based on this diversity of both teachers and students it can be misleading to understand the sector as homogenous, with this fragmentation within the field resulting in diverse ways of working across the field (Krarup & Munk, 2014; Rubenson & Elfert, 2019). As such, when assessing the impact of universally applied reforms such as *Smart and Skilled*, it is important to consider that reforms may have substantially different impacts in different areas of the field, due to this diversity. A previous study in the sector has indicated that different areas of the field can respond to changes in substantially different ways (Locke & Maton, 2019). In terms of the current study, the emphasis on the variegated nature of the vocational education field means that it is important firstly, not to generalise the attitudes of just one group of teachers to the field at large, and secondly, to consider teachers' understanding of their positioning within the broader topography of the VET field.

1.3   THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis engages in an exploratory study of public sector vocational education teachers in NSW in order to understand how these teachers experience marketization reforms in their work. It does this by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do public sector teachers in vocational education understand and characterize marketization reforms?
2. How do these teachers describe the effects of these reforms?
3. Do teachers in different locations of the VET field experience marketization reforms differently?

To address these questions the study draws on Bourdieu's field theory and the Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) dimension of Autonomy. These frameworks allow the field of vocational education to be seen as a distinct object of study, providing a way of conceptualising how marketization reforms can cause shifts within the field.

1.4   THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis will initially review different approaches within the literature to studying the incorporation of neoliberal principles into education (Chapter 2), detailing the affordances and limitations of these approaches in order to establish and justify the rationale for undertaking the research. Following this, the design of the research will be presented (Chapter 3), outlining how Bourdieu's field theory acted as an organising framework for the study, which was operationalised using the LCT dimension of Autonomy. The methodological approaches chosen to best answer the research questions are then explained, along with the processes involved in the documentary analysis, interviews and survey. The data analysis process is then described, including how the concepts of autonomy codes were applied to the data.

To begin the analysis, Chapter 4 presents an illustration of the vocational education field in NSW upon which marketization reforms were enacted. It uses documentary analysis of key texts from the field to establish the boundaries of the sector, as well as the specific values, principles and ways of working of the field. In then provides an explanation of the *Smart and Skilled* reforms themselves, focusing on how they interact with these central tenets of the VET field. Finally, it draws on academic commentary and the survey data to establish some of the broader responses within the field to reforms, demonstrating the effects caused by reforms at the 'chalkface', providing some initial insights into the first two research questions of the thesis.

Following this broader illustration of responses to reforms, Chapters 5 through 7 investigate how reforms were enacted in three distinct areas of the field. These case studies, into *nursing*, *trades* and *hospitality* education respectively, explore how the reforms are experienced and responded to within different areas of the field, in order to investigate if teachers' positioning in the field colours their perceptions of policy changes. These chapters draw on the semi-structured interviews to provide a voice for the teachers gather their perceptions of where their teaching area fits in the wider field of VET, before examining how this teaching area characterises the marketization reforms. Following this, the chapters examine the teachers' descriptions of the effects of reforms and their responses to these changes. In examining how different areas within the field experience reforms, these chapters aim to investigate the third research question.

The thesis concludes by bringing together the findings from the data chapters, comparing how the different teaching areas in the study conceptualise and adapt to reforms (Chapter 8). It then demonstrates the implications of these findings to the field, both in terms of future studies investigating reform in vocational education and potential suggestions for implementing such policy reforms. The thesis's contribution to original substantive and theoretical knowledge are then presented. Finally, the conclusion focuses on potential limitations of the research in the thesis and how these provide direction for future research.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The introduction to this thesis identified three primary research questions which it aims to explore. First, to investigate how public sector teachers in vocational education understand and characterize marketization reforms. Second, to explore how teachers' described the effects of reforms. Third, whether the teachers' location within the field of vocational education shaped their experiences of such reforms. To determine appropriate strategies for investigating these questions, this chapter will examine previous approaches to answering similar questions. It will analyse what these approaches have gleaned that could be valuable to the current study, as well as highlighting their limitations for addressing the questions in the current study. Based on the values and limitations gathered from the literature, this chapter will end with a number of 'needs' for the current study, in order for it to successfully address these research questions.

There is a diverse and voluminous literature which can shed light on neoliberal reforms being enacted in educational settings. This is unsurprising given the wide range of global contexts in which such reforms have been enacted. This broad range of literature can be divided and categorised in a number of ways. One such division would be to examine those studies based on theoretical arguments about neoliberal shifts in education generally and those case studies examining specific reforms. Alternatively, this literature could be examined in terms of the national focus of analysis, with distinct bodies of work examining change in the British, Australian and European contexts. However, this thesis will examine the research based on its approach to the topic, as this best highlights the diverse methodologies used to study reform in education. The chapter will first look at approaches that examine reform at the scale of the field at large, before zooming in to studies that focus on teachers as agents in the field. First, the chapter will examine 'macro' level analyses of neoliberal reforms impacting education. These approaches illustrate the 'big picture' impacts of reforms through largely using quantitative or economically-oriented approaches to investigate how policies have impacted whole educational fields. Second, studies that examine the impact on those within education will be discussed. These more 'micro' studies tend to focus on the impacts on teachers in the sector, using policy documents to glean the effects on teachers, or using

primarily qualitative methods to gather teachers' perspectives on the changes. Lastly, the chapter will examine literature that explores the lived experience of vocational education teachers, focusing on how they construct their specific identities. This research uses solely qualitative methods, including extended interviews and teacher narrative inquiry to examine how vocational education teachers develop their identity based on their location within the VET field.

2.2 MACRO ANALYSIS OF MARKETIZATION REFORMS

As outlined in Chapter 1, marketization reforms have become increasingly prevalent in education sectors globally. Vocational education has proven a particular target for these changes. The rise of globalisation and 'network societies' (Castells, 2010) have propagated a narrative of increasing global market competition, in which developed nations must strive to maintain their advantage. As knowledge and skills becomes an increasingly valued commodity, governments have focused on improving these, directing education to service the needs to the economy by maximising human capital (this can been seen accross a variety of contexts - Allais, 2012; Anderson, 2006a; Avis, 2005; Simmons, 2010). Governments focus on education as a lever in maximising competitiveness in international markets as it is one of the domains over which they still have a relatively strong influence. As vocational education is already oriented towards economic production, it is a natural target for government reform (Hyland, 2003). Furthermore, Avis and Atkins (2017) argue that as wider economic reforms have resulted in increased job obsolescence and precarious work, VET systems are targeted as having a crucial function in retraining workers into new areas. Given the economic motivations engrained in these changes, it is unsurprising that their economic outcomes have been regularly evaluated using quantitative approaches. A second method of examining the 'macro' impacts of these types of reforms on the field has been through using sociological theory to conceptualise changes to the sector and project their impacts. These two types of analyses will be discussed in turn.

2.2.1 Economic analyses

There have been a number of investigations of the wider impact of marketization reforms on VET, utilizing economic arguments or quantitative approaches. Analyses such as Oliver, Yu, and Buchanan (2019), Toner (2014) and Polidano (2012) focus on changes in the financing of

the sector, access to education and the distribution of students among institutions that have been effected by marketization reforms. The study by Yu and Oliver (2015) is illustrative of this work in examining the transfer of wealth between the public and private sectors in the period after marketization reforms in various states in Australia. It utilises quantitative data to map the changing economic flows in the sector, demonstrating the shifting distribution of government funding caused by the reforms. This type of research illuminates a number of the large-scale impacts of marketization reforms: the substantial shift in government funding to non-public providers, the corresponding exponential growth in VET-FEE HELP loans and the considerable profit margins many of these private companies were estimated to have achieved.[1] However, this economically-based quantitative approach is limited for studying the research questions of this thesis: it does not provide insight into how actors within the field experienced reforms. While this study utilised a number of case studies of specific private providers to focus on in order to illustrate their findings, it treats the impacts as largely homogenous across the field, using these case studies to represent field-wide changes. While this broad perspective reveals the large-scale impacts on the sector, it does not provide insights into how these effects may have impacted different areas of the field in different ways.

2.2.2 Policy document analyses

A second major approach to examining the sector-wide shifts of educational fields in response to marketization reforms has been to apply an analytical framework to interpret policy reforms and explain their outcomes on the field. This research is not grounded in empirical data from within the educational field– it draws from policy documents or surrounding commentary of reforms, analysing them using a theoretical framework to examine their logics and extrapolate their impacts. A substantial diversity of sociological theories have been utilised in this role of examining reforms, ranging from Marxism (Ainley, 2013) to social realism (Wheelahan, 2016), and Weber (Robertson & Woock, 1989) to Foucault (Bartlett, Frederick, Gulbrandsen, & Murillo, 2002). Among this work, there is a substantial body of literature that draws on the work of Bernstein and Bourdieu for examining changes in education, such as those by Jamieson and Naidoo (2004), Grenfell and James (2004) and Loughland and Sriprakash (2014). Naidoo, Shankar and Veers' (2011)

---

[1] VET-FEE HELP loans are government provided loans to cover the cost of vocational education courses

study of the impact of marketisation and consumerism on higher education exemplifies this work. It uses Bourdieu's (1993a) concepts of autonomous and heteronomous principles of hierarchization to establish the traditional values of the educational field, and the encroaching economic values of reforms that are in opposition to them. It demonstrates how economic values have been infused into education, increasingly turning higher education into a 'market' populated by 'consumers'. It posits that educational markets are generally highly constrained and regulated, distinguishing them as often taking the form of 'quasi-markets'. This type of market involves encouraging public educational institutions to cater to public demand, combining increased student and institutional autonomy with a greater degree of public accountability and government regulation. This is often achieved through 'voucher' systems where individuals are provided with an educational 'voucher' to use at their institution of choice – often both public and private institutions are eligible. This Bourdieusian analysis highlights a number of salient substantive issues that these changes raise: that markets can favour different types of students, that they can restructure the relationship between faculty and students, and that they can shift the prevailing values of the field.

Within this literature that uses policy documents to examine the sector-wide impacts of reforms, there is research that does not explicitly draw on social theory. This work forms a body of commentary on reforms, analysing and critiquing policy changes based on principled disagreements with the values embedded within them. This research regularly highlights problems in the logic of reforms, for example studies by Anderson (2006a) and Wheelahan (2016), or extrapolates unforeseen impacts of changes (for example, Hodge, Holford, Milana, Waller, & Webb, 2018; Natale & Doran, 2011). Some of this work draws on historic policy changes in the sector to demonstrate the trajectory of the field and emphasise the incongruities in policy approaches over time (for example, Harris, 2017; Shreeve & Palser, 2018). While this literature occasionally makes reference to sociology (examples of this include Foucault, Bourdieu, Giddens and Beck) this theorising structures thinking around the topic rather than forming the main basis or framework for analysis. Zoellner's (2016) study exemplifies this, as while it refers to Foucauldian understandings of discourse, it largely examines how different government reports and public commentary provide evidence of the restructuring of the VET sector in response to marketization reforms. The study critiques the intended goals of reforms against their potential outcomes, to highlight ineffective aspects of the policy. This approach, of examining policy documents to critique the logics of reforms,

provides a way to highlight internal contradictions within reforms and emphasise potential problems in their implementation.

2.2.3 Policy enactment process

While the above approaches of using quantitative data and examining policy documents have proven fruitful for demonstrating large-scale shifts in the VET sector in response to marketization reforms, they have a tendency to 'read off' the impacts of reforms from policy documents, rather than verifying them through empirical data. Alternative approaches within the field have warned of the dangers of simply reading off these impacts, even when using a nuanced theoretical framework, in that the complex nature of the reform process often results in unintended consequences 'on the ground' as policies are enacted (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Paris (1994) described this as research being based on common-sense, theoretical understandings of relationships within education which lack empirical evidence. A range of scholars, including Kennedy (2010) and Wang, Odell, Klecka, Spalding, and Lin (2010), have examined past education reforms and suggested that their impacts have often been overstated at the time of enactment, due to this lack of supporting data. There is often time-pressure in providing this sort of commentary, as the goal is to contemporaneously impact the policies themselves, which helps to explain the lack of empirical data. This issue has been highlighted as prevalent in wider public sector neoliberal reforms (Pollitt & Dan, 2011), with Hesse, Hood, and Peters (2003) describing the 'emperor's new clothes' model, in which reforms are less substantive than they first appear. This is explained by two tendencies: neoliberal governments' fetishization of markets as a panacea for all social ills results in them overstating their impact as a public-relations event, and academic communities' wariness of such policies resulting in doom-mongering about their purported effects without empirical evidence. An additional difficulty within educational contexts, is the importance of distinct, local contexts on altering policies that have been 'borrowed' from elsewhere (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Wang et al., 2010). This position emphasises the importance of empirical data, incorporating views from inside the educational field when analysing neoliberal policy reforms.

2.2.4   Value of macro analyses for the current study

These sector-wide examinations of the impacts of specific neoliberal policies have generated a wide range of valuable findings about how these reforms effect educational settings. The quantitative and economically-oriented studies have provided valuable illustrations of how reforms impact the distribution of funding and training in the field. However, while they are able to observe and describe these sector-wide changes, these approaches are less adept at displaying how reforms may impact different areas of the field. As Chapter 1 discussed, given that a key feature of the VET field is its diversity, it follows that reforms may have distinct local impacts. As these big-picture approaches treat the field as largely homogenous, they are less attuned to differences within the field. The second type of 'macro' evaluation of policy reforms, those approaches that examine and interpret policy documents in order to extrapolate their impacts, offer a different range of insights. These approaches, whether grounded in sociological theory or a general critical gaze, are able to pinpoint contradictions in reforms, reveal the logics that underpin them and predict problematic outcomes. However, a burgeoning body of work within the wider policy evaluation literature warns at the dangers of simply 'reading off' the outcomes of policies. Due to the complexity involved in the policy enactment process impacts 'on the ground' often differ from intentions enshrined in policy documents, suggesting a need to grapple with the lived realities of reform. This emphasises the importance of empirical work to document and demonstrate the impacts of changes within the target context. This provides the first guiding logic of the thesis: it utilizes empirical evidence of changes in vocational education to explore the outcomes of marketization policies 'at the chalkface'.

2.3   TEACHERS UNDER REFORMS

A second body of literature delves into how marketization reforms impact the work of those charged with interpreting and implementing policy within the classroom: teachers. This literature that investigates how marketization reforms have impacted teachers' work can be divided into two categories: that which examines policy documents to interpret how they may impact teaching, and that which involves empirical investigation of teachers' changing experiences under marketization through either qualitative or quantitative means. The uses and limits of these two bodies of work for addressing the research questions of the thesis will be discussed in turn.

2.3.1 Theorising vocational teachers under reform

There is a substantial body of work theorising and conceptualising how teachers work has been reconstructed under neoliberal reforms. Much of this work is based on Ball (2003) conception of the 'terrors of performativity' in education more widely, applying this concept to vocational education teachers undergoing managerial reform. A body of literature utilising this concept developed in response to UK reforms in the 1990s, such as studies by Avis (1999), Avis, Bathmaker, and Parsons (2002), Bathmaker (2017) and Avis (2002), while similar reforms in Australia in the 2000s prompted an analogous body of research, for example Drummond (2003), Hodge (2017) and Wheelahan (2007). Avis (2005) examination of managerialism and performativity in the Further Education (FE) sector are illustrative of this research.[2] Through examining relevant policy documents Avis reconstructs how performance management strategies have been more impactful in vocational education due to the decreased autonomy of lecturers in the sector, compared to educators in other fields.[3] He highlights that efforts to minimize risks and attain quantitative performance measures have resulted in increased managerial oversight of teaching, and more administration put upon lecturers to demonstrate that their teaching was 'compliant'. This approach, of demonstrating how changing socio-economic contexts and external pressures have shifted teachers' work over time, generates perceptive insights about their role, such as describing the increasing proletarianization of teachers; treating them as trusted servants, rather than empowered professionals. However, a limitation of this work is its tendency to rely on policy documents alone to 'read off' the intended or anticipated impacts that reforms have on teachers without investigating these effects empirically, or relying on author observations based on experience in the sector. This position acts to simplify the policy implementation process rather than investigated the complex nuance of how these policies play out in practice. This points to two directions for future research: to investigate whether conceptions generated from theoretically-oriented literature reflect the lived experience of teachers, and to examine teachers' perspectives of these changes to explore whether they generate new ways of understanding reforms.

---

[2] There is a terminology difference; the British Further Education system is the equivalent to the Australian Vocational Education system

[3] Once again, a terminology difference; in the British context, vocational educators are regularly referred to as lecturers

The importance of incorporating teachers in such research project is reinforced by their increased feelings of disempowerment in the field. In a number of different projects, teachers have suggested that as a group their opinions are often disregarded, not voiced or only given tokenistic input in the policy-making decision process (such feelings are expressed in Coffield et al., 2007; Martin, 2012; Nair & Kigotho, 2017; O'Brien & Down, 2002). A similar critique is made of academic literature, in which there is a lack of 'space' in academic discourse where teachers' voices have legitimacy (O'Brien & Down, 2002). Anderson (1999) and Powell (2012) have suggested that the voice of students appears to be similarly absent in education policy reform and the academic literature focussing on it. Haycock (2009) and Smyth (1995) argue that a central problem with teachers' absence in policy discourse is that it makes teachers increasingly sceptical and reticent about policy reforms as they perceive them as disconnected from actual teaching. Wider educational research has suggested that a lack of teacher consultation can lead to ineffective policy development due to importance of understanding the pedagogical contexts one is trying to improve when enacting educational reform (Coffield et al., 2007; Hargreaves, 1993; O'Donoghue, 1994). The experiences of teachers are important as they understand the realities of communities, schools and classrooms, which provides them with a different perspective from decision makers and bureaucrats (Romanowski, Cherif, Al Ammari, & Al Attiyah, 2013). The conclusion of much of this research, such as studies by Gleeson, Hughes, O'Leary, and Smith (2015), Apple and Beane (2007) and Floden and Huberman (1989), is that making public how teachers build pedagogic cultures within the prevailing conditions of their work is essential for policymaking.

This body of work highlights a second major need for the current study: incorporating empirical evidence of teachers' perspectives on reforms in the sector. This is useful for bridging the gap and ensuring that theoretical understandings of reforms are connected with empirical realities, an issue of particular salience due to the complexity and 'messiness' of the policy enactment process outlined above. Furthermore, providing space for the voice of teachers to have legitimacy in commenting on reform is particularly important to ensure that research does not mirror one of the central concerns of teachers; they feel excluded from the policy creation process.

2.3.2 Empirical teacher research

A second approach to investigating the 'micro' impacts of marketization reforms involves empirical studies incorporating the perspectives of teachers. This literature primarily utilizes qualitative methods to investigate how teachers have responded to marketization reforms within the British Further Education context (for example, Gleeson et al., 2015; Illsley & Waller, 2017; Spours, Coffield, & Gregson, 2007) and within the Australian context (for example, Black & Reich, 2010; Clark, 2003; Nakar, Bagnall, & Hodge, 2018; Schmidt, 2017). This work has a tendency towards using a grounded approach, reporting on the empirical data with minimal theoretical preconceptions to generate findings. In-depth reporting on case studies provides rich description of the experiences of vocational educators navigating policy reforms, replete with numerous examples of how they impact teachers' lives. The study by Nair and Kigotho (2017) exemplifies much of this literature. They utilised both focus groups and semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their concerns with VET marketization reforms in NSW and Victoria. This study provides rich description of the lived experiences of teachers under marketization reforms, detailing the multiple ways they had to shift their classroom practice in response to the changes. Nair and Kigotho demonstrated how teachers were increasingly distracted by compliance and competing with private providers, instead of being solely focused on providing high quality education. They were able to illustrate in the teachers' own words how they felt a tension between the incompatible goals of economic efficiency and educational quality (a feeling described elsewhere as 'values schizophrenia', Ball, 2003, p. 221). This type of study provides an opportunity for teachers to raise their own concerns about marketization reforms, however the lack of a theoretical framework confines the ability to generalize these concerns out to other contexts. As such, while this study is illustrative of the issues faced by VET teachers in NSW and Victoria its contribution to reforms in other settings is limited. A theoretical framework that is able to analyse and theorize the reforms themselves, as well as the dispositions of actors within the field, would enable building knowledge about this process of policy enactment by connecting the substantively different issues between reform contexts.

This type of research generates insightful concepts, even if they are more context specific than those enabled by utilising a broader sociological theory. Martin (2012) study of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) teachers in Western Australia exemplifies this.[4] Her research involved semi-structured interviews with 55 TAFE teachers from three colleges in

---

[4] TAFE is the major public provider of vocational education in Australia.

Western Australia and aimed at investigating the concerns of these teachers in carrying out their role in a changing VET environment. She demonstrated how teachers adopted an 'unofficial code of professional conduct' which aligned with their beliefs about vocational education, while ignoring policy directives from management. The traditionally high level of autonomy of TAFE teachers is cited as to how they were able to simply ignore reforms. This reticence to implement changes is argued to have been one of the reasons so many reforms in vocational education have had minimal classroom impact (Hamilton, 2007; Honingh & Karsten, 2007). This concept, that Australian VET teachers work at the interstices of policy reforms to mitigate and manipulate their outcomes to teach as they always have, has been described in a variety of research (for example, Black & Bee, 2018; Chappell, 2001; Coffield et al., 2007; Seddon, 2000), but in conceptualising this idea it becomes more generalizable to other reform contexts. Furthermore, in emphasising the legacy of teachers mitigating the intended impacts of reforms, these findings reinforce the need of the research to investigate the empirical impacts of policies in educational settings.

2.3.3   Empirically-grounded and theoretically-informed

Finally, there is a body of work that incorporates feature of both of the above groups of literature, embedding the empirical evidence of teachers undergoing marketization reform within a larger theoretical framework. These studies on how VET teachers have negotiated the impacts of specific reforms often utilise either Foucault's concepts of dominant discourses, such as Avis et al. (2002) and Gleeson et al. (2015), or Bourdieu's field theory, such as research by Wahlberg and Gleeson (2003) and Goh (2014). R. Smith and O'Leary (2013) exemplify this in their qualitative study examining how policy shaped the professional practice of FE teachers. The study uses Foucault's understanding of discourse and power to investigate how teachers negotiated the tensions of increased managerialism. This approach allowed the individual experiences of teachers to be foregrounded while also aiming to reveal the networks of power shaping those experiences, enabling them to contribute to building wider knowledge through the use of the sociological theories. The context specific findings, such as teachers' frustration with the increasing 'quantification' of their work performance, could be connected to more general understandings of how different discourses operate in educational settings. This demonstrates the value of incorporating empirical research with a robust theoretical framework to addressing the current research questions, as it would allow

findings about teachers adapting to marketization reforms in NSW to be connected to a wider range of work.

However, the above approaches are limited in answering the final research question of this thesis; examining whether teacher's position within the field colours their perceptions of reforms. These studies tend to treat the field of vocational education and those teachers within it as homogenous, with minimal focus on the location of the teachers within the field as important. Little sense is given that the field has a differentiated internal structure, with policies effecting different areas in different ways. Where difference is identified within the field, it is not investigated in a systematic way or connected to the teachers' position within the field. For example, Nair and Kigotho (2017) suggest that within trades teaching there appeared to be a 'counter-culture' of resistance to reforms, but this difference in responses is not explained or compared to other areas of the field. A previous study has suggested that the location of teachers in the field is important; that policies are negotiated and adapted in different ways by different positions (Locke & Maton, 2019). As the diversity of the field is one of its central characteristics (as outlined in Chapter 1) this would appear to be particularly important when studying vocational education. Based upon this, a third central need for the research within this thesis was a theoretical framework that would enable the teachers' position within the wider VET field to be considered and analysed when examining their responses to reforms.

2.4 VET TEACHER IDENTITY RESEARCH

There is a substantial body of literature focusing on vocational education that treats teachers within the sector as a diverse group, with specific identities. This research can provide insight into answering the third research question in recognizing and conceptualising the range of positions within the VET field. These studies can be termed 'teacher identity' research as it explores the process of how vocational educators develop a sense of identity in the field. This process is distinct from that which occurs in other educational settings as, by necessity, those becoming VET teachers have a previous occupational identity from their time as a practitioner within their industry.

Due to their necessary industry connection, the identity of VET educators, and hence their positioning in the field, is more complicated than that of teachers in other educational sectors.

A substantial number of scholars, such as Robson (1998), Avis et al. (2002) and Shain and Gleeson (2010), have explored how teachers in vocational education develop specific identities through working in two fields, often at the nexus of occupational and educational practice. Within the literature, this necessity of teachers having a 'foot in both camps', has resulted in them possessing what has been variously been described as a *dual lens* (Orr & Simmons, 2010) or *dual professionalism* (Esmond & Wood, 2017). This research largely utilizes qualitative methods to explore how teachers transition from working in industry, to working as a VET educator; developing a new professional identity in the process. Fejes and Köpsén (2012) exemplify this type of literature in utilising twenty semi-structured interviews with VET teachers in Sweden to investigate how they developed their professional identity through 'boundary crossing' between the community of their prior occupation's practice and the teaching occupation. The qualitative approach of the study offers teachers the opportunity to reveal their difficulties with this process; several teachers within the study struggled to balance these two identities. The rich, descriptive data demonstrated that the level of identification as teachers varies substantially, with some vocational teachers construing strong occupational identities, whereas others have weak relations to their occupational community, focusing instead, on belonging to a community of teaching. These varying levels of identity are important to the current study as it suggests that teachers can occupy very different locations within the field – with some teachers not primarily identifying as teachers, while for others it forms the basis of their identity.

This dual-identity is argued to be particularly pertinent in the VET field due to the lack of a unifying, substantial professional qualification to provide a collective identity to VET practitioners. Within the literature there a range of interpretations of how professionalism is defined (for discussions of teacher professionalism in VET, see Avis, 2007; Gleeson, Davies, & Wheeler, 2005; Randle & Brady, 1997), however underpinning these definitions is the conception that teachers lack control over their practice, are not treated as if they have pedagogic expertise and do not have clear, guiding principles that define their 'profession'. These understandings appear to have been embedded in the qualification required to become a teacher in vocational education. In the Australian context, teachers are required to complete a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, which can be obtained in a short amount of time, with some providers delivering it over a single weekend (Guthrie, 2010). This qualification has long been critiqued by a wide range of scholars in the field, for example Chappell (2001), Guthrie and Clayton (2010) and E. Smith and Yasukawa (2017), for being

more focused on upholding compliance standards than developing a teaching philosophy, providing little to no pedagogic guidance or educational theory, and having minimal pathways for further professional development. Similar concerns have been expressed about qualifications in the British system (see Atkins & Tummons, 2017; Feather, 2015; Robson, 1998). This lack of a central guiding philosophy, or standards as to what defines good VET teaching, are important factors in the fragmented nature of the profession.

This body of research is applicable to the current study in that it emphasises how teachers' previous occupational identities are important as they enter the VET field, as they structure their understandings of the sector. The lack of a unifying professional qualification enables this dual-identity to have a lingering influence on educators within the field. In providing numerous examples of different types of teachers developing this dual-identity over time, the studies emphasise the diversity of positions within the field and how they are important for teachers' identity. However, this research has demonstrated how this identity develops, without necessarily examining how this identity then impacts their understandings of the VET sector. Particularly, the research has not extended to how this dual identity may shape teachers' responses to reforms in the sector. Finally, while the research provides substantial description of how this identity is developed in different location of the field, the lack of theoretical framework underpinning the research limits the ability to build cumulative knowledge in understanding these dual-identities of VET professionals. This highlights the final need of the current research project: to enact a theoretical framework within the research that gets beneath the rich empirical descriptions of teachers, to see the underlying principles of their work, providing a mechanism for connecting their differing substantive concerns.

2.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter has contextualised the current study within the broader literature on incorporating marketization reforms into educational settings. It reviewed literature which engaged in 'macro' scale analyses of the impacts of reforms on whole educational sectors, before focusing on studies that investigated the effects reforms have had on teachers. Finally, it covered a body of research on how teachers' construct their identity in vocational education, which provides insight into conceptualising the topography and diversity of the VET field. The review revealed a number of insights into the policy implementation process

but also highlighted a number of key issues that need further investigation in order to understand how teachers interpret and incorporate reforms in the sector.

Given the consistent emphasis in the literature that policy implementation in education is a complex process, with outcomes often differing from proscribed intentions, there is a need to investigate the actual empirical impacts of policies in their context of enactment. Within this context, teachers are important agents in the policy interpretation and implementation process, and as such foregrounding them within research is pertinent. Furthermore, teachers have frequently lamented their relative lack of influence over policy decisions, so providing space for them to have a legitimate voice in policy discussions is additionally beneficial. While descriptive studies incorporating the perspectives of teachers are shown to provide rich detail and valuable lessons about specific reforms, without a theoretical framework that can conceptualise this analysis it is difficult to connect studies and cumulatively build knowledge in the field. Finally, even when using a robust theoretical framework to examine empirical data, it is important to consider the differentiation within the field as an important factor in policy implementation. Treating the VET field, and the teachers within it, as homogenous is particularly problematic both due to the variegated nature of the field and the dual-identity of those within it.

As such, the review of the literature raised four primary needs to be considered within the current study. First, to not reduce what happens in vocational education to factors from beyond the field, as if it just reflects policy changes. In this sense it is missing the 'meso' level of analysis, in seeing the field as a distinct object of study rather than focusing solely on field-wide effects or teachers' work. Second, to provide a space for the voice of teachers to contribute to the policy process and policy literature. Third, to be able to differentiate the field of vocational education, not treating it as a uniform, homogenous whole. Lastly, to go beyond the teachers' substantive descriptions of reform by conceptualising them with a theoretical framework. In order to address these concerns, a systematic approach to conceptualising the field of vocational education is needed. Rather than presenting external government policy as having unmediated, unidirectional outcomes on vocational education, this approach should consider how the specific values and ways of working of VET refract such changes in nuanced and unpredictable ways. Furthermore, it needs to conceptualise the field as having a differentiated internal structure in order to explore how these policies can have diverse effects depending on the location within the field. Finally, while different areas

of the field may have substantively different concerns about reforms, the approach needs to be able to reveal the principles underlying these concerns in order to connect the disparate examples. LCT, and specifically the dimension of Autonomy, provides the field with such an approach. Chapter 3 will explain this approach in greater depth, exploring its theoretical foundations and how it can be applied to the current research.

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 reviewed existing literature on marketization policies within VET in order to contextualise the current study within contemporary approaches to studying VET reform, revealing what is known about the topic, how this knowledge has come to be known and what remains to be addressed within the field. The literature review generated four primary concerns for the current study in order to systematically examine how teachers in vocational education understand and interpret marketization reforms. First, it identified a need to not reduce what happens in vocational education to factors from beyond the field, as if it just reflects external policy changes. Second, it emphasised the importance of providing a space for the voice of teachers to contribute to policy discussions. Third, the approach needs to be able to differentiate the field of vocational education, not treating it as a uniform, homogenous whole. Lastly, it identified the importance of utilising an approach that can go beyond the teachers' substantive descriptions of reform to conceptualising them with a theoretical framework.

This chapter will outline how these needs were considered by, and incorporated within, the research design of the current study. Bourdieu's field theory acted as a central organizing framework shaping the ways of thinking about reforms in vocational education. Legitimation Code Theory extended upon and operationalised these concepts in the research. Both these theoretical frameworks will be introduced in this chapter. Following this, the aims of the thesis will be recontextualised in terms of the theories used. The methodologies underpinning the research will then be justified, before detailing the data sample and collection methods used. The data analysis process will then be explained, including how the theoretical framework was incorporated into this process. Finally, the techniques used to maintain the quality of research will be explained.

3.2   BOURDIEU AND FIELD THEORY

The needs obtained from the review of the literature necessitate a framework that acknowledges vocational education as a distinct social entity, that impacts the way external policy reforms are enacted in the sector, providing a way of studying reforms at the 'meso' level of analysis. Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu, 1993b) provides a useful way of conceptualising this relationship between the social arena of vocational education, and external forces such as neoliberal policy reforms. Bourdieu rejects the notion of society as a seamless totality, instead conceiving of a wider social space made up of distinct *fields* (such as the artistic field, the university field, the scientific field etc.). These fields are described as relatively autonomous as while they are impacted by forces from outside the field, they still maintain their own logics and direction. Within the field, agents possess varying levels of *capital* – status and resources within this social universe. Participants within the field vie in competition over the dominant *capital* within the field – scientific capital in the scientific field, cultural capital in the artistic field and so forth - and the power to decree the hierarchy and conversion rates between these various forms of capital. These struggles can alter the shape and divisions of the field, as to alter the distribution and relative weight of forms of capital effectively modifies the structure of the field. The behaviour of agents within fields are guided by what Bourdieu terms *habitus* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus refers to how processes of socialization in a field develop within individuals a 'system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95) that structures their tendencies towards certain actions and behaviours. The field itself can be considered both structured and structuring, in that the actors within them are structured by the rules and patterns of the field, but also that these actors in turn control the rules and boundaries of the field.

This framework can be useful in examining how forces from outside a field can impact it. In perceiving fields as relatively autonomous the framework acknowledges that external forces can influence the internal workings of a field. However, each field prescribes its particular values, and possesses its own regulative principles which it imposes on all the objects or agents which enter it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This process is likened to a prism refracting light, in that external influences, as they enter the field, are refracted according to

the internal structures and specific logics of the field (Bourdieu, 1993b). The degree of refraction of external forces, such as government policies, depends on the 'refraction coefficient' (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 182) of the field, which reflects its relative strength of autonomy from other fields. For example, the field of law could be characterized as strongly autonomous, with its own distinct values and ways of working, resulting in external forces being heavily refracted as they enter this domain to abide with the principles of the field.

Returning to the needs presented by the literature review, Bourdieu's field theory provides a way of conceptualising changes that treats vocational education as a distinct object of study with its own values and ways of working that impact how policies are incorporated into the field. Rather than policy documents being simply 'reflected' into practices within the field, they are 'refracted', altering them in unplanned ways. Furthermore, it represents the field as internally differentiated, embedded with varying habitus that result in different ways of seeing and interpreting reform within different positions in the field. This conception provides a useful organising framework for structuring analysis of VET reforms; policies and principles from outside the sector are refracted by the particular ways of working on VET, resulting in the same policies having divergent impacts in different areas of the field. Thus, Bourdieu's field theory highlights the importance of presenting the field in a holistic manner, in order to accurately present the vary impacts of changes on the field. Specifically, it raises a number of key elements that must be understood about a field: its external relations to other fields, its internal structure of competing elements and actors, and the beliefs operating within the field. These elements, drawn from Bourdieu's field theory, provide the organising structure of Chapter 4, where a broad picture of the vocational education field in Australia is presented.

However, these concepts alone have difficulty connecting the substantively different concerns of the teachers to explain why they understand the reforms in different ways. While Bourdieu consistently emphasised the importance of relational thinking within sociological analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), the concepts of field, capital and habitus do not necessarily enable this. There is a temptation when using this framework to conceptualise empirical data as simply a type of one of these concepts, for example, a practice reflecting 'working class habitus' or 'middle class habitus'. This kind of typology is useful for describing differences, but is limited in explaining the reasons underpinning this difference, the relative distances between these practices or changes in these practices over time. Rather

than simply covering the empirical descriptions of the teachers with a 'veneer' of theory, an approach is required that reveals the principles underlying these practices, thus allowing them to be related together with more explanatory power (Maton, 2018). In focusing on the principles underlying practices the approach utilises categories that are not locked on to the object of study, allowing findings to be extended to other arenas. As such, while field theory has acted as a productive organizing framework for the research, orienting it towards considering fields relationally and sensitizing it to the refraction of reforms in different ways throughout the variegated field, a second theory will be used to operationalize and extend on these concepts: Legitimation Code Theory.

3.3   LEGITIMATION CODE THEORY

Legitimation Code Theory is a multi-dimensional conceptual framework for researching and changing practice. It first emerged within 'social realism', a loose 'coalition of the minds' (Maton & Moore, 2010) in the sociology of education in the early 2000s that argued for the significance of knowledge as an object. LCT builds upon a number of longstanding sociological and philosophical traditions, primary among these are Bourdieu's field theory and Bernstein's code theory.[5] LCT is rapidly growing as a basis for empirical research into education at all institutional levels and across the disciplinary map – from primary schools to universities, from physics to jazz – in a widening range of national contexts (e.g. Maton, Hood & Shay 2016) . This includes a burgeoning body of work exploring areas of professional and vocational education, including marketing (Arbee, Hugo, & Thomson, 2014), financial accounting (Myers, 2016), business education (Arbaugh, Fornaciari, & Hwang, 2016), theatre direction (C. Hay, 2012), design (Dong, Maton, & Carvalho, 2014; Wolmarans, 2016), and engineering (Winberg, Winberg, Jacobs, Garraway, & Engel-Hills, 2016; Wolff, 2017; Wolff & Hoffman, 2014). The diversity of work using LCT within vocational settings reflects its ability to reveal the educational and professional goals underlying practices, suggesting its applicability to the current study.

LCT inherits one of its central premises from Bourdieu; that in each social field, actors' beliefs and actions represent competing claims to legitimacy within the field (Maton, 2000).

---

[5] For further detail on the intellectual antecedents of LCT, see Maton 2014.

LCT comprises five dimensions which allow researchers to get beneath the surface features of actors' practices, to the underlying organising or structuring principles (Maton, 2014). These dimensions can be used to explore the organising principles of dispositions, practices or entire fields. This thesis will utilise only one of these five dimensions: autonomy codes. As the most recently developed dimension of LCT, the body of research using autonomy codes in education is small, but burgeoning – having been applied to analysing teaching practice (Maton & Howard, 2018; Meyer, 2019; Msusa, 2019) and policy documents (McKenna, 2019).

3.3.1 Autonomy codes

The notion of autonomy codes stems from the simple premise that any set of practices, ideas or beliefs comprises constituents that are arranged into particular relations (Maton & Howard, 2018).[6] Both constituents and their relations may take a manifold diversity of forms. Constituents may be actors, ideas, objects, artefacts, etc., and relations among constituents may be based on explicit procedures, tacit ways of working, mechanisms, rules, etc. Autonomy codes explore the degree of insulation around constituents and around the basis of their relations. These are conceptualized as:

- *positional autonomy* (PA) between constituents positioned within a context or category and those positioned elsewhere; and
- *relational autonomy* (RA) between relations among constituents of a context or category and relations among constituents of other contexts or categories.

Each may be stronger (+) or weaker (−) along a continuum of strengths, where stronger represents greater insulation and weaker represents lesser insulation. Thus, stronger positional autonomy (PA+) indicates where constituents are relatively strongly delimited from those of other practices, and weaker positional autonomy (PA−) indicates where such distinctions are relatively weakly drawn. Similarly, stronger relational autonomy (RA+) indicates where purposes, aims, ways of working, etc. are relatively specific to a set of practices (autonomous principles of relation), and weaker relational autonomy (RA−) indicates where they may be drawn from or shared with those of other practices (heteronomous principles of relation).

---

[6] This section draws extensively from Maton and Howard (2018), who further conceptualised and codified this dimension of LCT
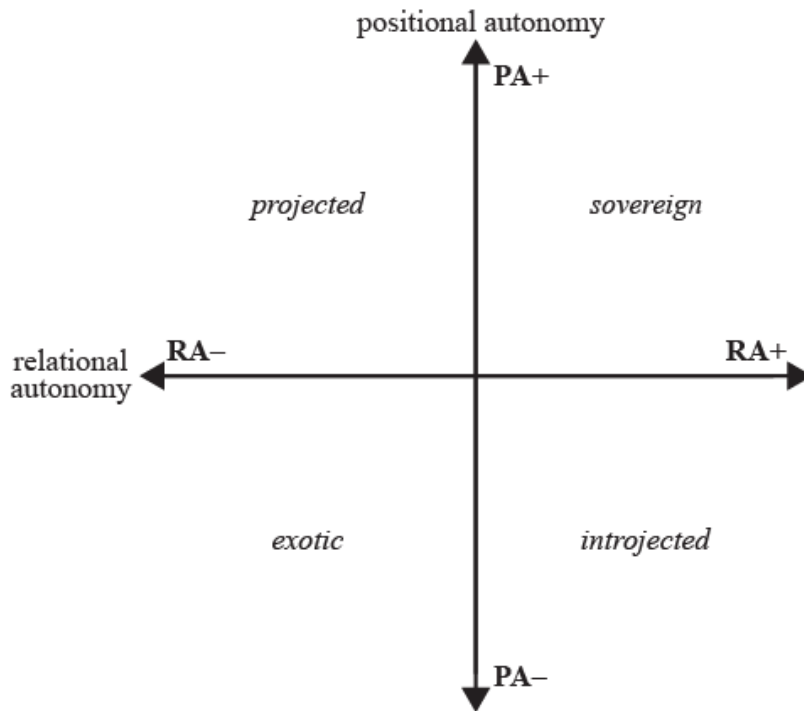
Figure 3.1. Autonomy plane (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 6)

As shown in Figure 3.1, these continua can be visualized as axes of the *autonomy* plane. Varying the two strengths independently (PA+/−, RA+/−) generates four principal *autonomy codes*:

- *sovereign codes* (PA+, RA+), where status is accorded to strongly insulated positions and autonomous principles, i.e. what is valued emanates from within the context and acts according to its specific ways of working;
- *exotic codes* (PA−, RA−), where legitimacy accrues to weakly insulated positions and heteronomous principles; i.e. status is associated with elsewhere;
- *introjected codes* (PA−, RA+), where legitimacy resides with weakly insulated positions and autonomous principles, i.e. practices or actors associated with other contexts act according to ways of working from the specific field; and
- *projected codes* (PA+, RA−), where legitimacy resides with strongly insulated positions and heteronomous principles of relation; i.e. what is valued emanates from within the context but acts according to ways of working drawn from elsewhere.

Within any context a specific autonomy code may dominate as the basis of achievement, but may not be transparent, universal or uncontested. Not everyone may recognize and/or be able

to realize what is required, there may be more than one code present, and there are likely to be struggles among actors over which code is dominant. These struggles are likely to occur depending on whether there is a *code match* or a *code clash* among actors. A code match describes a situation in which the field's legitimation code matches that of an actor's – ie. the relative strengths of their positional autonomy and relational autonomy are similar. A code clash describes the situation when the field's legitimation code differs from that of an actor within it. Additionally, the autonomy code valorised within a field, or by an entity, may change over time. A *Code shift* refers to a movement from one quadrant of the autonomy plane to another. When the field undergoes a code shift it can change the 'rules of the game', altering what practices are valorised within a field. Therefore, an actor who was previously experiencing a code match and finding success, would be negatively affected if the code (and thus the 'rules' governing the basis of achievement) were to change. Finally, as the autonomy codes do not reflect four typologies (Maton, 2014; Maton & Howard, 2018) movements within codes are also possible due to the ongoing relational strengthening and weakening of positional autonomy and relational autonomy. These movements within the quadrants are referred to as *code drift*. Code shift and code drift are a useful way to show change over time within a field and the resultant effects on how practices are valued.

3.3.2   What autonomy codes offer to the current study

Once again, returning to the needs of the study drawn from the literature review. Bourdieu's work offered a conceptual framework that allows us to treat vocational education as a distinct field of practice, with a differentiated internal structure; effectively allowing the process of policy enactment to be examined in which external ideas are transformed and reimagined as they are integrated in different locations within the field. Autonomy codes incorporate and operationalise these aspects, with the autonomy plane enabling the mapping of differentiation within the field through the incremental variation of positional autonomy and relational autonomy. While both frameworks can provide space for the voice of teachers (this has a greater impact on the choice of methods, outlined in section 3.5), Bourdieu's approach lacks an explicit method of connecting and conceptualising the substantively different concerns of the teachers (Maton, 2018). As the project is examining teachers in very different areas of TAFE, the potential impacts of reforms and the teachers' concerns about these, vary significantly. Autonomy codes allow the project to go beyond teachers' substantively

different concerns about reforms to reveal the underlying principles that underpin these concerns. As such, they offer an analytical device allowing a clearer comparison between these practices, while still foregrounding the actual concerns of the teachers. A final benefit of autonomy codes to the current study is that they further refine Bourdieu's conception of the relative autonomy of fields. Within Bourdieu's work there is a premise that organisations or actors whose positions are strongly insulated within the field value the autonomous markers of achievement of the field. Maton (2005) has argued that this is not always the case; agents positioned within the field can pursue values from beyond it, and vice versa. This is particularly useful when examining vocational education as increasingly agents from outside the field are occupying prominent positions within it.

3.3.3   Enacting autonomy codes

When enacting different dimensions within LCT, a translation device is often used. A translation device is a tool which helps to bridge the 'discursive gap' between theory and data (Bernstein, 2000, p. 209). They create an explicit intermediary dialogue between context-independent theoretical concepts and context-specific empirical data. Thus, they are developed through engagement with the specificities of an object of study, taking into account the particular empirical forms emerging from the problem situation (Maton & Chen, 2016). Each row of a translation device is structured so that when read from left to right it translates theory into data, and when read from right to left it translates data into theory. Translation devices offer two strengths when used in qualitative research. First, they make the basis of claims in analysis more explicit to the reader, enabling greater analytical transparency (Maton & Chen, 2016). Second, they allow more consistent analysis across a study, particularly when the substantive concerns being discussed are different.

To enact autonomy codes in practice, they must first be defined in relation to the object of study. As they are tools for analysing insulation, one must first ascertain what is being insulated; that is, 'what constituents and what principles of relation (e.g. purposes, aims, ways of working) are considered constitutive of *this* context, *here, in this space and time, by these actors?*' (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 10). The result of this is termed the 'target' within LCT, and acts to define stronger positional autonomy and stronger relational autonomy within the study. As Table 3.1 displays, target constituents embody stronger positional

autonomy and all other, non-target constituents embody weaker positional autonomy; target principles embody stronger relational autonomy and all other, non-target principles embody weaker relational autonomy (Maton & Howard, 2018). For greater precision, these categories can be divided by determining which constituents and principles are considered *core* and which *ancillary* to the context or category, and which non-target constituents and principles are considered closer (*associated*) or further (*unassociated*) from the target. As such, an essential first step for research using autonomy codes is to define the 'target'. The target depends on who or what is being analysed, and can be determined by various methods, such as gathering the perspectives of key players in a field, prolonged immersion within a context or examining key texts in the field (policy documents, media discussions and wider discourse). Various actors within the field may have different understandings of the target; whose target forms the focus of analysis is dependent on the research questions. The selection of the target does not valorise that position, it simply solidifies one point of reference within the field, from which other positions can be mapped in relation. The target for the current study, along with a specific translation device for studies of vocational education, will be explained in Section 3.9, when outlining the data analysis process.

PA/RA	1st level	2nd level
+	target	*core*
		ancillary
	Non-target	*associated*
−		*unassociated*

Table 3.1.Generic translation device for positional autonomy and relational autonomy (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 10)

Reconceptualised in terms of autonomy codes, the analyses involved in addressing the research questions are as follows:

1. What autonomy codes underpin public sector teachers' characterisation of marketization reforms? Do they describe the reforms causing code shift or drift in the field?

2. How do these teachers describe the effects of these reforms?

3. Do the autonomy codes of the teachers shape their responses and attitudes to reforms? Do they describe having a code match or code clash with reforms? What is the effect of this?

By addressing these questions, this exploratory study offers a new way of examining reforms within education. It provides a way to conceptualise how various actors in a field respond and adapt to changes to the underlying principles of the field, providing a potential explanation to why responses in a field may vary. How this theoretical lens was incorporated within the methodology and methods of the study is now described.

3.4   METHODOLOGIES

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigating marketization in vocational education. This section will justify this approach, explaining the choice of missed-methods as a whole, and the quantitative and qualitative components within it, before explaining the logic of embracing a case studies approach.

3.4.1   Mixed-methods research

As one of the central needs of the research was to foreground the opinions of teachers who enact reforms within classrooms, a qualitative component was best suited to achieving this goal. However, while the research wanted to investigate the response of specific positions in the field, it also aimed to provide a wider perspective of how reforms were incorporated in order to position these case studies within the responses of the wider field. Mixed-methods approaches are useful for investigating complex and multiplex phenomena, such as this, which are not easily amenable to single frame probing, with the messiness of complexity demanding multiple investigative tools (Greene, 2007). By using multiple, complementary and flexible methods this form of study can capture various perspectives resulting in a more holistic and accurate understanding of the phenomena under study (Ponterotto, Mathew, & Raughley, 2013). This type of 'methodological polytheism' espoused by Bourdieu (1996), has been demonstrated to be an effective research tool in a variety of contexts (Pearce, 2012) and has been successfully employed within LCT analysis (Lamont & Maton, 2008; Maton & Howard, 2016). This also offers the potential benefit of methodological triangulation; if the results of multiple methods collecting overlapping data are converging, greater confidence can be placed in the evaluation's overall findings (Liamputtong, 2012; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2013).Within the current study, as both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research

cover similar topics, the findings from the surveys and case studies can act to support each other.

A consideration within mixed-methods research is whether the component methods are run in parallel with one another, or whether they are run sequentially. Within this study a sequential approach is used. One of the benefits of a sequential approach is that the results of one method, can help to develop and inform other methods within the project (Hesse-Biber, 2010). In this research project, the qualitative approach was used to investigate the three primary case studies, then a quantitative approach was enacted to explore whether findings from the case studies were also felt by other teachers. This was done explicitly, with teacher quotes from the interviews presented in the survey, and the level of agreement with the quotes rated.

3.4.2   Qualitative research

The research adopted a qualitative research paradigm as it aimed to explore how the teachers understood and interpreted changes to their world. The strength of qualitative research is its ability to explore the happenings, behaviours and perspectives of individuals in specific social settings and provide rich detail as to how they build meaning in their world (Cohen, 2011). Qualitative methodologies are regularly used in educational research as they provide insight into the world of those actually engaged in educating, replete with the language, values, prejudices and perceptions teachers have about their work (Goodson, 1992). This form of interpretive research provides insight into how teachers 'make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world' (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). This study aimed to present not only the multiple meanings individual actors attached to their experience, but also illustrate the processes that formed those meanings (Flick, 2014; Maxwell, 2005). The complexity of these explanations necessitated the findings being delivered through rich descriptions of the context, actors and events to assist the reader in experiencing the events vicariously (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2008). Additionally, the current study had an exploratory component, meaning that a solely quantitative approach would have been inappropriate as the restrictive nature of its questions limit the potential discussion areas to those deemed important by the researcher (Sarantakos, 2013).

3.4.3 Quantitative research

Within a qualitatively focused mixed-methods research project, such as this one, the quantitative methods play a supporting role (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The quantitative component can perform a number of different functions within this type of research. First, researchers can use quantitative methods to gather some descriptive quantitative information such as demographic statistics of the population under study, in order to contextualise the results of the qualitative study. Second, the quantitative component may mirror the themes covered in the qualitative component, assisting in the interpretation of the qualitative findings by providing additional perspectives (Hesse-Biber, Johnson, Rodriguez, & Frost, 2015). Finally, the quantitative component may 'test out' some of the theories generated by the dominant qualitative findings (Hesse-Biber et al., 2015). The current study includes a quantitative component for primarily the latter two reasons: it aims to triangulate the findings from the interviews with survey data, and examine whether the teachers' concerns were felt by a wider group of educators.

3.4.4 Case study research

A case study approach is characterized by a focus on a specific phenomena which is contained by explicitly set boundaries. In attempting to examine how different teaching sections within VET characterized and responded to marketization reforms this research involves a multiple case study, with each teaching area an individual case (Stake, 2008). The areas were selected to exemplify different potential experiences of reform in the field – the rationale for the selection of the different areas is explained in section 3.6.1. Multiple cases were used to illustrate difference within the field, but also due to the belief that 'understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing about a still larger collective of cases' (Stake, 2008, p. 123). The research is thus characterized as an 'instrumental' case study: the study of the case is intended to develop insights into wider issues and populations beyond the case, in addition to focusing on the intrinsic issues of the case itself (Stake, 2008). Within case study research it is vital that each case is contextualised by outlining its history before data is presented (Creswell, 2013), as such, each data chapter will include a history of the section within the field of vocational education.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Three methods were used in the research: interviews, a survey and document analysis. This section will justify the use of these methods to answer the research questions and explain how they were enacted.

3.5.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used in the study as they allowed the researcher to collect in-depth information by engaging with each interviewee's perspective (Patton, 2015). Semi-structured interviews gave consistency between the interviews in terms of the major themes discussed, while giving the subject greater control over the direction of their responses and enabling space for new findings to emerge from the data (Flick, 2014). As I wanted to foreground the experiences and beliefs of the teachers I asked "theory-driven, hypothesis-directed questions" (Flick, 2014, pp. 218-219) in order to make the interviewees' implicit knowledge more explicit. Furthermore, I utilized a number of commonly recommended interviewing techniques, such as broad introductory questions to develop rapport, active listening to engage the participant and the strategic use of silences to prompt elaboration (Liamputtong, 2012). The interview guide is attached in appendix 1 and was developed through the process of two pilot interviews with experienced vocational education teachers. The interviews ranged in duration from 40 to 90 minutes. They focused on how teachers understood vocational education, how they felt about reforms and what impact reforms had on their work. Brief notes were made immediately after each interview, highlighting important moments, reflecting on the process and identifying areas I could improve my interview technique.

3.5.2 Survey

The survey was distributed online to teachers via an email from TAFE NSW management. It was designed and hosted on REDcap, a partner of the University of Sydney. The survey involved some brief demographic data, followed by a number of statements for which the participants rated their level of agreement with on a Likert scale. Finally, there were a number of open survey questions where participants could voice their own concerns or extend upon previous responses. A number of the questions in the survey were based off data collected during the interviews, embedding the informants' language in the questions. Furthermore, the concept of autonomy codes was also integral in the survey design process.

These concepts were embedded in several the questions, sensitizing the research to issues in the VET field and focusing the teachers on origin and values of reforms. The survey device can be found in appendix 2.

3.5.3 Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis was used in the study to construct a broader picture of vocational education, in order to establish the values, principles and trajectory of the field (Bowen, 2009). In Bourdieusian terms establishing a dynamic conception of the field, including its values, is essential as these ways of working form the 'refraction coefficient' of the field which is imposed on external forces as they enter the sector (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 17). Documentary analysis is useful for this process as it allows for a historical construction of the field to trace its trajectory over time, incorporating a variety of different perspectives (Cohen, 2011). This research project primarily made use of public records for this analysis, including policy documents of both the NSW state and Australian federal governments, news reports containing VET commentary and various government-commissioned reports. Particularly useful in this process were reports produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) which was established as an independent research body on the VET sector in 1981 which provided a detailed history of changes in the field.

3.6 DATA SAMPLE

The study focused on vocational educators working for TAFE in NSW. All TAFE colleges in NSW are run by TAFE NSW, a central organisation that is the largest provider of vocational education in Australia (Boston Consulting Group, 2016). It has experienced a long history of substantial policy reforms since at least the 1990s (Chappell, 1999b). TAFE NSW was the site of the research due to the timing of recent reforms within the sector. The *Smart and Skilled* reforms were enacted at the start of 2015, with the teacher interviews taking place in 2016 and 2017 when TAFE was still adjusting to the changes. As such, the teachers had all worked within the post-*Smart and Skilled* environment for at least a year, although a number did suggest that they were still adapting to it. NSW was the last state in Australia to follow federal government direction in marketizing their VET sector (Victoria, the first, introduced their policy in 2009). This is important as the earlier introductions in both Victoria and South Australia had received substantial media coverage highlighting problematic behaviours of

private RTOs and the diminishing role of TAFE in those states (e.g. Bachelard, Cook, & Knott, 2015; Ross, 2014; Tomazin, 2015).

3.6.1 Sample selection

As a goal of the research was to investigate how reform policies played out within vocational education, TAFE teachers were selected as the primary focus of the research. Teachers can provide descriptions of changes replete with the language and lived experiences of those actually tasked with implementing reforms (Goodson, 1992). Chapter 2 demonstrated that currently the voice of teachers is often lacking when policy reforms are discussed, as well as highlighting the potentially unique insights they can offer.

As the focus was solely on publicly employed vocational education teachers TAFE NSW was identified as an important research partner. Using contacts known from previous research projects (Locke & Maton, 2019), TAFE NSW was approached to help facilitate recruitment. Upon successfully completing TAFE NSW's research ethics process, TAFE emailed teachers in the Sydney metropolitan region who taught in the three case study areas. Teachers were then able to choose to be part of the research by contacting the researcher to arrange an interview time. There was a concern that the approach coming from TAFE management could dissuade teachers who were critical of reforms participating in the research. However, it was emphasised to the teachers that all reports on the research submitted to TAFE management would be anonymized. Additionally, snowball sampling was used from initial respondents to access other co-workers (Liamputtong, 2012). This also acted to minimize the impact of responder bias, in that those who initially volunteered to be interviewed may have particularly strong feelings on the subject of reforms.

The interview component of the research aimed to investigate specific areas within the field in order to examine whether different areas of teachers within VET experiences to reforms differently. As such this phase of the research engaged in purposive sampling in order to target three different areas within vocational education to provide these specific perspectives (Carpenter, 2008; Liamputtong, 2012). The three areas chosen to act as the case studies were teachers of nursing, trades and hospitality. These three areas were chosen as examples of the diversity of the field due to their differing characteristics, with each underpinned by a distinctly different knowledge base and pedagogic philosophies. Nursing education commenced at TAFE during the 1980s, making it a relatively recent entrant to the field.

Additionally, the associated industry of nursing is largely based upon pro-social rather than economic goals. A final distinguishing factor is that teachers in the sector are required to have a degree in order to be qualified as a Registered Nurses. Comparatively, trades education has been a long term-occupant of the sector, having a presence in the field in since its informal establishment in the late nineteenth century. Trades education focuses on training apprentices to operate within the commercially-oriented construction sector, and most of the teachers have moved into VET directly from working in industry meaning that fewer possessed higher education qualifications. Finally, hospitality education is a newer arrival in vocational education, like nursing, although it does not have the legacy of educational philosophy and development of nursing. Its associated industry is part of the fast-growing service economy, sharing a largely commercial orientation with the trades. The rich descriptions of the teachers in these areas provide useful insights into how these different areas frame, understand and engage with changes in the sector. This is part of the process of giving a more substantial voice to the experiences of VET educators within the field. Due to the diversity of areas covered by the three case studies the experiences of these teachers may act to reflect those of other teachers in similar areas within TAFE.

The survey component of the research involved a broader survey of TAFE teachers to investigate whether the themes raised in the interviews resonated with TAFE teachers more widely. Similarly to the interview process, emails inviting teachers to participate in the research were sent out by TAFE NSW to all teaching staff at a major metropolitan region of colleges. While this worked smoothly for the interviews, there appeared to be more resistance to distributing the survey. While confusing at the time, the catalyst behind this change was later revealed by the head of TAFE NSW resigning in controversial circumstances (Singhal, 2018). This indicated a potential nervousness about allowing TAFE teachers to be part of an external research project during a political sensitive time. With new management entering TAFE shortly after this, concerns about media attention appeared to subside and my questionnaire was distributed to the teachers.

3.6.2   Size and demographics of sample

A total of twenty-one interviews were completed across the three teaching areas: eight nursing teachers, nine trades teachers and four hospitality teachers (see Table 3.2). The case

studies of the three areas aimed to examine how these teachers interpreted and reacted to reforms, rather than accurately reflect the opinions of all teachers from these areas. As such the sample was not intended to be representative, rather it was to allow a deeper understanding of how the teachers interacted with reforms (Liamputtong, 2012). For all three groups the interview program was curtailed once data saturation had been reached: new themes were not emerging in later interviews and existing themes had been efficiently and effectively saturated with optimal quality data (Bowen, 2008; Carpenter, 2008). While only four hospitality teachers were interviewed, they offered a unique opportunity; they were the entirety of the full-time staff of a single college who deliver a prominent and visible hospitality course within TAFE. This provided an opportunity to explore the variety of perspectives across a whole department in regard to marketization reforms.

Pseudonym	Section	Teaching experience (years)
Angela	Nursing	8
Clare	Nursing	17
Camille	Nursing	11
Julia	Nursing	19
Jemima	Nursing	24
Julia	Nursing	28
Ilhan	Nursing	2
Rebecca	Nursing	6
Jameis	Trades	3
Colin	Trades	23
Jamelle	Trades	17
Andrew	Trades	12
Drew	Trades	9
Russel	Trades	18
Peyton	Trades	22
Tom	Trades	32
Aaron	Trades	17
Mina	Hospitality	16
Alex	Hospitality	9
Omar	Hospitality	14
Marco	Hospitality	16

Table 3.2. Demographic information of interviewees

Forty-nine teachers completed the survey.[7] The average age of the respondents was 53 and they had on average 20 years teaching experience within TAFE. The age of the teachers was similar to the national average for vocational education teachers of fifty years old (Australian Government, 2019). Figure 3.2 displays that the respondents came from a wide spread of teaching areas within TAFE, with the most frequent being 'technology and business services', 'career pathways, aboriginal languages and employability skills' and 'health, wellbeing and community services'. This diversity provides the study with a wide range of teachers' perspectives.
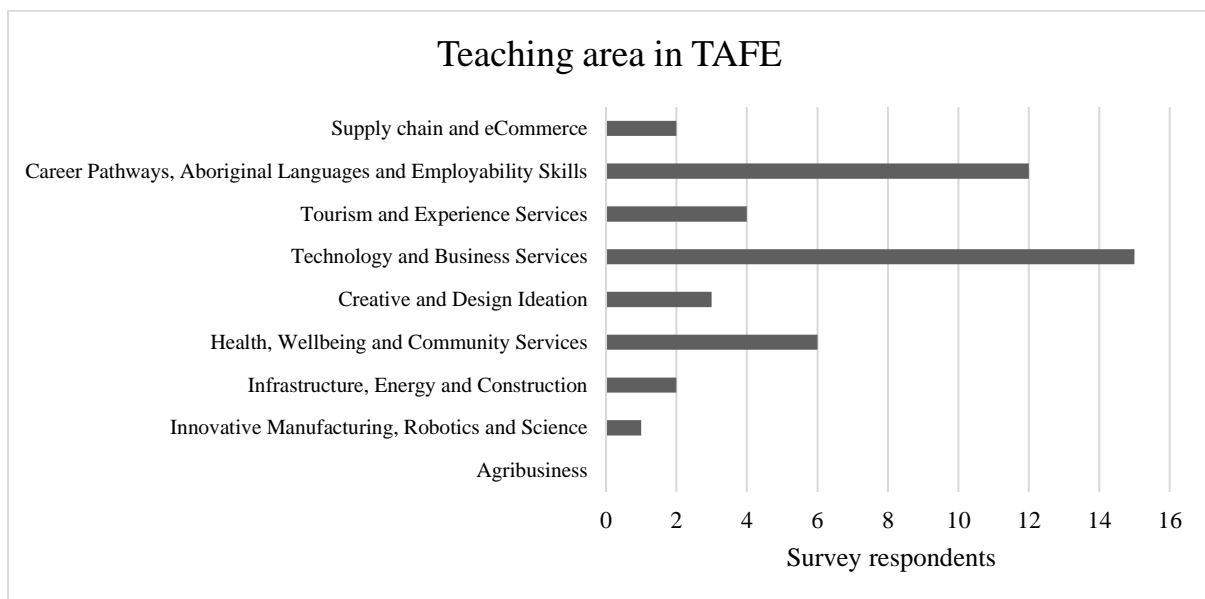
Figure 3.2. Teaching areas of survey respondents

3.6.3   Ethical considerations

A number of processes were enacted to ensure that the research would not harm participants and was conducted in an ethical manner. Firstly, prior to contacting potential participants I obtained approval from the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee (protocol no: 2016/827). In accordance with the approval, participants in both the survey and interview components were provided a participant information statement that detailed the purpose of the study, what their involvement would entail, as well as their ability to withdraw at any time. Those who participated in the interviews signed a consent form before it began, outlining that they had not been coerced into the study and giving permission for the

---

[7] As the survey was sent to teachers at a number of metropolitan Sydney campuses, the response rate is unknown.

interview to be recorded. Copies of these forms can be found in appendix 3. The survey participants were informed that by completing the survey they were indicating their consent for being part of the study. The confidentiality of the teachers was particularly important as TAFE was under strong political pressure at the time, resulting in heightened media scrutiny increasing the potential career ramifications if this confidentiality was breached. As such pseudonyms were used for all participants and colleges, with overly specific job details avoided (Liamputtong, 2012). Additionally, as contact was being made with the participants via TAFE NSW itself, I obtained ethics approval through their internal ethics process. This 'Application to conduct research in TAFE NSW' was granted in 2016 (document 16/1194824) and detailed that the institute had the right to withdraw at any point, that the participation of staff must be voluntary and that they must be informed in variations in focus, scope or timeframe of the research.

Finally, the interviews were explicitly designed to provide a space for the teachers to raise their concerns and frustrations about reforms, which based on past literature, they had minimal opportunity to do in either contributions towards policy or within academic research. This led to several of the interview participants reflecting that they enjoyed the experience, as it provided an opportunity for them to clarify their concerns and reflect on their teaching practice, a recognised benefit of research interviews (Glesne, 2006). This was further evidenced in that a substantial number of interviews stemmed from snowballing from initial contacts, indicating that the interviews had been a largely positive experience.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis methods using LCT involve iterative movements between theory and data, allowing a theoretical understanding without losing touch with the empirical features of the object of study (Maton & Chen, 2016). This immersion in both theory and data enables both 'thick description and thick explanation, both empirical fidelity and explanatory power' (Maton & Chen, 2016, p. 47). The following section outlines both the thematic and LCT analysis involved in this process, however it is important to emphasise, that there was not a clear demarcation between the two. The theoretical analysis was continually re-evaluated and adjusted through 'looking back' to the empirical data, while the thick description of the data was re-read and re-understood in light of theoretical developments.

3.7.1 Thematic analysis

The initial phase of analysis involved a sustained immersion in the data. The interviews were transcribed, annotated and then summarized (Creswell, 2013). These processes, along with performing the interviews themselves, were important for beginning to develop deeper initial insights about the interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This was followed by a close reading of the text, in which the data was coded based on the substantive concerns of the participants (Liamputtong, 2012).[8] Descriptive labels were assigned to these coding categories. In total, 221 coding categories were generated, which were then compared and modified, with similar themes grouped together to create a second hierarchical level of coded themes (24 in total). Examples of this hierarchical coding can be found in Figure 3.3. Throughout this analysis the individual participants and what they said was foregrounded. For each case study a summary document was created which was rich in thick description and incorporated many direct quotes from participants (Lincoln, 1985). The prevalence of the different themes within each case study was examined as a starting point for pinpointing the differences in practices between the groups.

▼ ⬤ TEACHER'S VALUES	21	105
⬤ ageing workforce	1	2
⬤ belief in TAFE	4	8
⬤ better educational qual...	5	5
⬤ collaboration within TA...	3	3
⬤ connection with other...	2	2
⬤ duty to profession	2	2
⬤ institutional knowledge	1	1
▼ ⬤ MORALE	13	24
⬤ decreased morale	12	16
⬤ deprofessionalized	3	5
⬤ destructive environment	2	2
⬤ difficult personalities in...	1	1

Figure 3.3. Thematic coding hierarchies

---

[8] This qualitative coding was facilitated by the NVivo 12 software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2018).

As the survey tool included insights from the interviews, its results could be analysed within this same coding framework. Themes from within the survey, reflected and resonated with those discussed in the interviews. The data gathered from the surveys was analysed to generate descriptive statistics, mapping wider teacher attitudes towards reforms. This information was then compared to the results generated from the interviews in order to determine if the themes found during the interviews could be supported by the data provided by the surveys. This was used to depict a broader perspective of the field, before the qualitative case studies of the three areas provide a richer depiction of how the three teaching sections responded to changes.

3.7.2   Autonomy analysis

After sufficient immersion in the data, I turned to applying autonomy codes to the object of study. As outlined in section 3.3, when using autonomy codes, one must first specify the 'target' of the research. This was done through close reading of the interviews, discussions with actors in the field and investigation of policy documents and commentary on the field. As the current study is examining a field of practice, the constituents within it are largely actors or institutions, while the relations among these constituents are the rules, norms and values of the field. Within the interviews, the teachers described certain actors and institutions as part of the field (*positional autonomy*) and that these actors were oriented towards goals specific to vocational education (*relational autonomy*). The teachers delineated those actors originating from inside the field (PA+) and those from outside the field (PA–). These positions were intrinsically connected with the activities the individuals performed; actors from the VET field, largely performed vocational educational activities, whereas those from outside did not. The teachers had a clear understanding of what activities characterised educational positions, identifying in-class teaching, educational resources design and classroom discipline as activities reflecting *stronger positional autonomy*, with non-educational activities characterised as *weaker positional autonomy*. Similarly, they identified a set of values that they regarded as being the central principles of the field (RA+). Vocational education was characterized as a central tenet of an egalitarian society, providing educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups. This necessitated a focus on the holistic development of the students and the central yardstick within the field being their educational

success. These values embody *stronger relational autonomy* within the study, with other conceptions of vocational education embodying *weaker relational autonomy* (within this study these are often goals oriented towards the fields of politics and business). After determining the target of the research, separate translation devices were developed for positional autonomy and relational autonomy.

The translation device created for coding positional autonomy is presented in Table 3.3. From left to right, the theoretical concepts are described in terms of how they were interpreted within the study, before finally quotes from the data are used to exemplify these descriptions. For positional autonomy, the target area was simply whether actor-roles were located within vocational education or outside. However, within each of these there was a second level of division to provide finer delicacy in analysis. The teachers perceived a difference between their *core* activities (+ +), in-class teaching and lesson preparation, and *ancillary* activities (+) that supported these educational tasks, such as administration and classroom discipline. In terms of non-targets, teachers viewed activities connected with TAFE's organisational objectives (such as compliance activities and connecting with industry) as *associated* (–) with their target, and activities from outside vocational education as *unassociated* (– –). An example from the data: 'we find our happy time in the class talking about the industry and delivering content' would be coded as within the target area, as it is discussing educational aspects of teachers' work, but would in addition be coded as *core* (+ +) as it is talking specifically of in-classroom educating. Alternatively, 'I had no experience as an entrepreneur or a marketer, and I was suddenly expected to sell' would be coded as weaker positional autonomy, as it is talking about job-roles that are divorced from the educational field, but would also be *unassociated* (– –) as marketing courses is not distinctly connected to teachers' classroom education.

PA	1st level	in this study:	2nd level	in this study:	example quote:
+ ▲	*target*	within vocational education field	*core*	purely teaching role (in class educational teaching & educational preparation)	'we find our happy time in the class talking about the industry and delivering content'
			ancillary	supporting educational roles surrounding teaching (administration, classroom discipline)	'there is a lot more filling out forms now – some of it seems like admin for the sake of admin'
	non-target	outside vocational education field	*associated*	organisational, but not educational, roles (compliance, course viability costing, connecting with industry)	'we have to spend a lot of time liaising and connecting with industry, which isn't really teaching'
▼ −			*unassociated*	non-educational roles (anything else)	'I had no experience as an entrepreneur or a marketer, and I was suddenly expected to sell'

Table 3.3. Translation device for positional autonomy

The translation device for coding relational autonomy is presented in Table 3.4. For relational autonomy the target is being oriented towards the traditional principles of vocational education. As with positional autonomy, there is a 2nd level of division to provide more nuance to analysis. The teachers perceived a difference between their *core* purposes (+ +), such as holistically supporting students or improving educational quality, and *ancillary* purposes (+) that they understood as connected to these central goals, such as students' employment outcomes or the efficiency of courses. In terms of non-targets, teachers viewed purposes oriented towards objectives of TAFE as an organisation (such as improving student completion percentage and connecting with industry) as *associated* (–) with their target, and purposes further from educational goals as *unassociated* (– –). Applying this to the data: 'If I've sent that person out now with more skills and knowledge than I had, I'm happy' would be coded as stronger relational autonomy (as it is a goal based on educational outcomes), but additionally as *core* (+ +) as it is focused purely on educational principles, rather than looking at other benefits. In contrast, 'Because courses are now dollar-driven, the easiest was to do that, is to increase class numbers and cut delivery hours' would be coded as a non-

educational goal (as it is not based on educational rationales), but would also be coded as *unassociated* (– –), as it is not even focused on goals of the organisation, rather it is oriented solely towards economic principles.

RA	1st level	In this study:	2nd level	In this study:	Example quote:
+ ↑ ↓ −	*target*	educational goals	*core*	purely educational goals (holistic student perspective, educational goals, knowledge and skills)	'if I've sent that person out now with more skills and knowledge than I had, I'm happy.'
			ancillary	supporting educational goals (employment outcomes, efficiency)	'people are coming to us to get jobs, so if we can set them up for employer that's perfect'
	non-target	non-educational goals	*associated*	goals organisational, but not educational (completion %, connecting with industry)	'we have to maintain a good completion percentage so that our course looks successful'
			unassociated	non-educational goals (anything else, e.g. profitability of courses)	'because courses are now dollar-driven, the easiest way to do that, is to increase class numbers and cut delivery hours…'

Table 3.4. Translation device for relational autonomy

These translation devices provide a framework for analysing the autonomy codes of the data, which can then be visualised on the *autonomy plane*. This is useful for displaying the relative positions of different actors across the field. As both the translation devices have a second level of delicacy, these are overlaid on the autonomy plane to more clearly depict the analysis taking place. This is displayed in Figure 3.4. The autonomy plane provides a means of capturing the variegated and unfolding nature of practices by tracing the pressures felt by the teachers through the use of arrows. This allows *code drifts* and *code shifts* to be simply displayed, particularly important when examining changes in a field.

Figure 3.4. Autonomy plane with guidelines

3.8   QUALITY OF RESEARCH

Validity and reliability of findings are central components to any research. While traditional positivist understandings of validity and reliability are inappropriate for qualitative research, a variety of strategies have been developed to maintain the rigour and trustworthiness of research (Creswell, 2013; Liamputtong, 2012; Lincoln, 1985). As the quantitative components this project are only being used in a descriptive capacity to illustrate the qualitative data, rather than through tests for statistical significance, it will be incorporated within a single discussion of the quality of research. The measures employed to uphold the quality of the research will now be outlined.

A 'methodical analysis process' (Patton, 2015) was used to ensure that the explanation of the researcher authentically represented the descriptions of the participants (Chilisa, 2012). The

rigorous and methodical data analysis began with transcription and close reading of the interviews. There was an initial period of immersion in the data and 'close reading' to ensure that the findings were grounded in the empirical. Following this was a period of vacillating between the data and the theory, iteratively coding the data to connect it to theoretical concepts from LCT. Only following this prolonged period of immersion did the writing up of analysis begin, with each case study written up separately to allow time for reflection on the implications of the findings.

Throughout the analysis process emphasis was placed on ensuring 'rich, thick description' of the data, providing substantial details of the research setting and participants' place within it (Liamputtong, 2012). This was enacted through substantial quoting of the teachers to allow their words to shine through in order to reveal 'how meanings are expressed in the respondents' own words rather than the words of the researcher' (Baxter & Eyles, 1997, p. 508). This reduces the opacity of the analysis, allowing the reader more insight into evaluating the analysis and conclusions.

'Triangulation' was a strategy used by the research to improve the reliability of findings. The study enacted methodological triangulation, in using the interviews and survey to investigate the same phenomena, generating largely convergent results, which increases the dependability of the findings (Hesse-Biber, 2011). Additionally, a second type of triangulation also helped to improve the dependability of the study. Source triangulation involves multiple sources within the data reiterating similar perspectives on the same issues (Liamputtong, 2012), which is highlighted in the research by the use of multiple quotations from different participants to illustrate issues and themes.

Within qualitative research the 'generalizability' of enquiry is often enabled by the use of theory (Liamputtong, 2012). Johnson and Christensen (2004, p. 19) argue that 'well developed theory explains how something operates in general… and it enables one to move beyond the findings of any single research study'. Within this study, LCT plays this role. Autonomy codes provide a conceptual framework that reveals the principles underlying the teachers' substantive concerns, allowing generalisations and comparisons between the case studies, and generating conclusions that can be ported to fields beyond vocational education.

The 'translation devices' outlined above also have an important function in regards to the quality of research. Subjective analysis will always be a part of qualitative research, however efforts need to be made to demonstrate that respondents have not been misinterpreted in the analyses due to the biases, motivations or interests of the inquirer (Lincoln, 1985). The development of the translation devices, as well as the analysis and coding in the project were workshopped, revised and reworked with members of the Sydney LCT community throughout the thesis. While the researchers involved did not study vocational education, the theoretical knowledge they had developed from focusing on a wide range of topics was useful in checking the validity of the theoretical coding and the development of the translation devices. These translation devices systematically clarified and codified how the theoretical categories related to the problem situation, allowing more consistent analysis across the interviews. These also afford increased analytical transparency in the study by providing the reader greater insight into how data and theory is mediated in the analysis.

Finally, an 'audit trail' is a key component of increasing dependability in qualitative research (Liamputtong, 2012). This refers to a detailed description of the steps taken throughout the research project, including the rationale for research design, data collection and data analysis (Lincoln, 1985). In the present study, these aspects of the audit trail were regularly discussed and recorded with my supervisor, and are reported in sections 3.4 to 3.8 of the thesis.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis, including how it was enacted in the research process. The research utilised Bourdieu's field theory as an organising framework in order to conceptualise the field of vocational as an object of study. The theoretical framework of Legitimation Code Theory was outlined, with a detailed explanation of the concepts of Autonomy codes, the dimension of LCT enacted in the research. The aims of the research were then reconceptualised within this theoretical framework, before outlining the methodological approaches chosen for the research to best answer these questions. The data sample and collection process were then described for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study. The data analysis process was then explained, including the development of two translation devices to help connect empirical data with theoretical concepts. The chapter finally addressed how the validity and reliability

of the data in the study were ensured. The next four chapters enact the analytical process that has been outlined. Chapter 4 constructs a broad picture of the vocational education field in Australia, outlining the current values of the field and their trajectory in the past using data from the documentary analysis. It also presents findings from the survey to demonstrate how a larger group of teachers have responded reforms. Chapters 5 through 7 present data from the interviews to delve into the case study areas and explore in more detail how teachers in nursing, trades and hospitality understood and responded to the marketization reforms. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by bringing together these analyses, comparing the different autonomy codes of the case studies to highlight the key findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4 - THE VET FIELD IN NSW

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to examine how teachers in vocational education have understood and experienced marketization reforms. As outlined in Chapter 3.2, Bourdieu's field theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the field of vocational education as a specific object of study, with its own values and ways of working. Rather than external changes simply being forcibly enacted upon a field, they are refracted and altered in unintended ways by the specific structures, values and principles of the field, which Bourdieu described as a field's 'refraction coefficient' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 17). As such, this chapter will present an analysis of the Australian vocational education field in order to understand the 'refraction coefficient' of the field in which marketization policies are being enacted upon. Bourdieu's field theory further offers a organizing framework in identifying central features of a field that are important to this 'refraction coefficient'. The external relations of the field, or its level of insulation from and integration with other fields, are crucial features in how external forces are reinterpreted within it. Additionally, as fields have a variety of positions within them, with different areas having their own histories and trajectories, the internal structure of a field must be examined in order to understand the diversity within it. Finally, the beliefs of the field are comprised of the different values systems within, which act as strands that can be drawn upon by actors within the field. In order to accurately depict the specific structures and ways of working of the VET field, all three of the above will be considered.

This chapter aims to do this by using policy documents and secondary sources to outline and explore the characteristics of the field. However, in order to understand the historical moment at which the marketization reforms impacted the field, there is a need to understand both the characteristics of the field and their trajectory over time. Whether features of the field have only recently risen to importance, or whether they are deeply embedded within institutional values, determines how policies are interpreted, and as such section 4.2 will delve into the history of the field, where necessary, to explain the trajectory of these attributes. Following this in section 4.3, the *Smart and Skilled* reforms themselves will be examined, including how they impacted these attributes of the field. Finally, section 4.4 will provide a broad-brush

perspective of how the reforms have impacted the contemporary field, using both academic commentary and teacher survey data. Within each of these sections the external relations, internal structure and values of the field will be considered, acting as an organising structure for the analysis.

4.2   THE NATURE OF THE VET FIELD

Chapter 2 emphasised that the vocational education field is a complex space, where varied interests compete for influence within the sector, resulting in a complex and convoluted array of institutions. Public, private and third-sector Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), along with universities and high schools operate in a sector with a heavily involved regulatory body, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), guided by industry councils and government polices at both the state and federal level. It is unsurprising that in a field with such a wide diversity of different actors that there are a number of competing ways of thinking about VET. These ways of thinking about the sector have largely arisen, or at least been given legitimacy and foregrounded by various key moments in the field's development. In order to illustrate the specific values and principles of the VET field, this section will examine the fields' external relations, its internal structure and the beliefs within it.

4.2.1   External relations of the field

In the contemporary era a central feature of the VET field is its tight integration with both the political and economic fields. This integration has resulted in a field heavily directed by political forces, with industry organisations having substantial control over the contents, duration and type of training occurring in the field. However, this close connection has not always been the case. While the field did initially emerge from within industry in the second half of the nineteenth century in Australia, in the 1970s it coalesced as a national field with a cohesive identity, becoming more independent from associated industries. Tracing this trajectory, from a field relatively insulated from external influence in the 1970s to the contemporary period of integration with industry explains some of the resistance to reforms observable in the contemporary field.

The close integration of VET with economic interest is visible from its genesis, as business initiated more formalised training for employees in the late nineteenth century. Termed 'technical education' this type of training took place predominantly in the workplace. The development of the sector was informal and undirected, with a large number of various mechanics' institutes and schools of mines arising with various goals and purposes (Murray-Smith, 1965; Pickersgill, 2004). As part of the negotiations during the federation of Australia in 1901, education and training were reserved as a function of the states. However, across the states, governments became increasingly involved in vocational education due to concerns that public education was failing to provide an adequate supply of skilled labour to the expanding primary and secondary industrial base of the economy (Chappell, 1999a). This government involvement clarified the purpose of technical education and provided a more specific strategic direction. Thus, from the outset, technical education was oriented to primarily servicing the growing needs of industry and the wider economy, and training surplus labour for industrial employment, with the structures varying depending on states' needs.

The strong connection with industry weakened for a period during the 1970s, before strengthening again in the contemporary period. The federal government began directing policy in the sector in the 1970s, through the use of the grant funding of states, effectively establishing a national VET system. Additionally, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) acted as an inter-governmental body to align state objectives with federal priorities. Prompted by the findings of the 1969 Tregillis report and the 1974 Kangan report, the progressive Whitlam Federal Government established public vocational education colleges across Australia which were operated as TAFE (Department of Labour and National Service, 1970; Wheelahan & Moodie, 2017). It shifted the focus from labour activation and meeting the needs of industry to providing individuals with education to attain whatever vocational pathway they chose, while also focusing on access and equity (Guthrie, 2010). Resultant of this was increasing insulation from industry, as the field developed its own practices and ways of working distinct from the demands and wants of industry. Additionally, fees were abolished for vocational training, resulting in a substantial increase in the size of the sector; enrolments rose from 430 000 students in 1973 to 952 000 by 1986 (Ryan, 2002), with the number of TAFE colleges increasing to 107 across NSW by 1990 (Lundberg, 1993). Concurrently, government funding to the sector increased from $100 million in 1975 to $173 million in 1980 (Jones, 1982). This increase in funding and enrolments provided the sector

with its own autonomy, as it was less reliant on connections with, and funding from, industry partners.

However, even during this period, vocational education was still tightly connected to the political field. In lacking the academic autonomy of the tertiary education sector (as outlined in Chapter 2), the VET sector was frequently impacted by political forces (Harris, 2015). By the late 1980s the lack of insulation from the political sphere, saw shifts in politics having substantial repercussions on the VET sector. Primarily, the rising popularity of neoliberal conceptions of the role of the public service within the political field, resulted in the valorisation of markets and the denigration of 'big government' public institutions becoming increasingly prominent within the VET field. Within NSW the neoliberal agenda was imported from the political field to the VET field through two reports by management consultant Dr Brian Scott: *TAFE Restructuring* and *TAFE's Commission for the 1990s*. Scott was highly critical of TAFE NSW, characterising it as a slow, inflexible and unresponsive centralised bureaucracy (Shreeve & Palser, 2018). He argued that the Kangan vision for vocational education lead to TAFE becoming 'all things to all people' rather than focusing on the skills-training needs of industry. The solution proposed in the reports was to decentralize TAFE bureaucracy to regional networks of colleges and to increase the focus on marketing, business development and connections with industry. This prompted a shift back to vocational education being once again embedded with industry partners, increasing the influence of industry over the field.

A tangible example of the increasing influence of the economic field over vocational education was the introduction of Training Packages in 1997. They were introduced to replace state-based qualification structures in an effort to standardize and simplify vocational qualifications across Australia. Training packages removed curriculum content to focus on incorporating specific competency standards in qualifications and guidelines for workplace assessments, incorporating competency based training principles in vocational education (Anderson, 2006a). Additionally, industry gained more control over the content of VET courses through the establishment of Industry Training Advisory Boards (that were eventually replaced by Industry Skills Councils, which in turn, were also recently replaced by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee). These bodies delivered advice on national and state skills needs that were incorporated in the design of Training Packages, providing more power for industries to determine the content of education provided in the VET sector.

This increasing influence of industry demonstrated the shifting external relations of the field over time. Since the 1970s, the trajectory of the field has been towards decreasing autonomy, with increasing influence of the economic and political fields over the content of the VET field. Forces outside education have driven changes in the VET sector through top-down mechanisms, relying on managerial processes to relay them within organizations. As this sector has become increasingly 'acted upon' by other areas of society, feedback from the results of these changes does not appear to be considered in future policies, resulting in a disconnect between policy and practice in the field (Seddon, 2009b). This undermines the ability of the field to adopt best practice and generate cumulative knowledge about policy success in the sector. The outcome of this has been repeated, regular policy reforms being a central feature of the field. Teachers within the sector have been experiencing this trajectory for a substantial period, and this may have been important in shaping their responses to the 2015 marketization reforms.

4.2.2   Internal structure of the field

A central feature of the contemporary vocational education field is its diversity of providers. A wide range of different types of providers operate in the sector, including public TAFE colleges, private providers, community organisations, universities and schools.
There are 4277 VET providers nationally, training over 4.5 million students (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2016), a number which has not substantially shifted since 2000 (Korbel & Misko, 2016). To provide context to this, higher education in Australia educates 1.1 million students in 114 institutions, while the schools sector educates 3.5 million students in 9500 schools (Productivity Commission, 2011). The above paints a picture of a sector with a much greater diversity of providers than higher education, however each provider on average caters to more students than schools. Examining the internal structure of the field provides further insight into its distribution, as there is a substantial discrepancy in the size of public and private providers in the sector. TAFEs, on average, have 19577 students, more than twenty times private providers who average 819 students (Korbel & Misko, 2016). This illustrates a field where large TAFE providers are offering a wide range of qualifications, while a plethora of smaller private providers focus on offering a more specialized range of courses.

However, this diversity within the field is a relatively recent feature. While during the infancy of the field it was characterised by a wide variety of local colleges with minimal coordination (Murray-Smith, 1966), the federal government intervention in the sector in the 1970s resulted in the field coalescing. In introducing nationwide standards and practices the sector formed around TAFE as the public provider, delivering the bulk of training nationwide. At this point vocational education was largely synonymous with TAFE, as there were minimal other institutions in the sector. Each state organised their systems into regions and colleges, that acted under the broader TAFE umbrella, resulting in fairly consistent delivery across Australia and a largely homogenous field.

With the reorientation of the sector towards industry-objectives in the 1980s, the field became more heterogenous as new institutions were introduced. The conception of TAFE was altered from being the vocational arm of public education provision to being only one part of an industry-led vocational education sector aligned to industry priorities (Seddon, 2009b). Training provision was now the responsibility of an efficient and productive network of publicly funded, but not wholly public providers, effectively ending TAFE's monopoly on public funding and accredited courses (Anderson, 1996). This was reflected in the language of government policy; instead of being referred to simply as 'TAFE', it became the wider Vocational Education and Training sector. Governments at the time made sure to emphasise that competition was not an end in itself but a strategy to drive efficiency, innovation and responsiveness (Shreeve & Palser, 2018). At this point TAFE was enabled to charge for training, meaning that very few VET qualifications in Australia were now free (Wilkinson, 2014). Multiple reports at the time argued that introducing more providers to the sector through training markets would impose competitive discipline on both public and private providers to improve quality (Toner, 2014). However, while private providers did increasingly enter the sector, they had minimal access to government funded courses; in 2006 less than 10 per cent of total public funding for VET was allocated on a competitive basis (NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory tribunal, 2006). This was in spite of bipartisan support for a vocational education market, and mostly due to the influence of trade unions and employer groups who used their access to policy discourse to ensure that the vast bulk of funding stayed within the public sector (Zoellner, 2016).

As such, while at the start of the reform process the VET sector had a diverse range of institutions operating, TAFE still provided the bulk of training, particularly that which was

government subsidised. However, the trajectory of the field was towards increasing diversification of providers, and as Table 4.1 displays, TAFE's market share decreased considerably over this period.

	1996	**2009**
TAFE	3 747 000	304 000
Community	1 014 000	561 000
Private provider	83 000	868 000

Table 4.1. Student numbers from different VET providers in NSW (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2017)

4.2.3 Beliefs in the field

The vocational education field has a number of competing values systems operating within it, with different understandings of the sectors' purpose and goals. These perspectives can be broadly grouped into an educational conception of the sector, where providing quality education is the primary goal, and an economic understanding, which perceives the sector in terms of its economic contributions to the nation. Both these understandings still have substantial influence in various areas of the field, and both have been important in the development and implementation of policy in the area. The educational perspective has been a longstanding feature of the field, providing the underpinning logic since the formalisation of the sector in the 1970s, while the economic perspective has gradually risen to primacy, being incorporated within the field in a piecemeal fashion, through various reforms and reports.

The educational values still present today in the sector were established in the field by the Kangan report. This report instigated the creation of TAFE and established it with a distinctly educational philosophy. The delivery of vocational education and training through TAFE was understood as a key government responsibility and included a social obligation to provide broad-based vocational education to develop students' abilities to their best advantage (Goozee, 2001). This was the first time that a specifically educational philosophy was

established for vocational education in Australia. It challenged the narrow technical-instrumental view of training which had been dominant within the sector previously and constructed the philosophy of TAFE as much closer to the discourses used around public schools; increasing the focus on the importance of social justice and equality within vocational education (Chappell, 1999a). TAFE was now tasked with balancing the needs of industry with the educational, personal and social development needs of the individual. This was part a wider global rethinking of vocational education, with an increasing shift to focus on the holistic concept of 'lifelong learning' underpinning VET, prompted by research from the UNESCO Institute of Education in the early 1970s (Harris, 2017). This view also led to a strong focus on the unique pedagogies of VET, as opposed to schools and universities, with an emphasis on training teachers to specifically educate adults (Knowles, 1970).

It was enthusiastically embraced in NSW and is often seen in retrospect as the golden age for TAFE, as it instigated new buildings, better staff development opportunities and better student support such as libraries, child care centres and student councillors (Shreeve & Palser, 2018). This in turn led to increased enrolments in a wide variety of courses and the expansion of campuses (Shreeve & Palser, 2018). These guiding principles were reinforced through increases in staff recruitment to cater to these growing student numbers. Students began returning to TAFE to continue or repeat general education courses and more generalist teachers were recruited to service this new student cohort. As such, TAFE teachers were increasingly constructed, not just as industry practitioners, but also as liberal educators involved in the education and training of adults (Chappell, 1999a). This led to a vocational education sector dominated by a provider with a strong charter of educational and social justice goals, staffed by teachers imbued with these same values.

This educational conception of the sector was not without issues. In shifting from a primarily on-the-job activity to improve skills to providing background understanding of the principles that underpin work in order to enable further education (Hager, 2007), VET began to be conceptualised as part of the field of education. It can be argued that in crafting the sector to be underpinned by educational logics and principles, VET was shoehorned into being considered the bottom or second tier of the higher education sector, rather than an independent sector in its own regard (Polesel, Klatt, Blake, & Starr, 2016). As high schools became increasingly academically-focused, due to state wide exams, this 'second-class' status of technical education was reinforced (Murray-Smith, 1965). Its relegated position

within the hierarchy of the educational field resulted in it frequently being dubbed the 'Cinderella' of the educational system, in that it was 'unplanned, inadequately financed and looked on without enthusiasm by employers, employees, and educators' (W. F. Connell, 1980, p. 50). Furthermore, vocational education has been demonstrated to be an inefficient pathway to higher education for low socio-economic status (SES) students (Wheelahan, 2009), as such framing it as part of the educational field may be actively damaging to learners (Polesel et al., 2016).

The economic perspective of the VET field began to underpin reforms to the sector in the 1980s. The *Skills for Australia* report of 1987 prompted the first in a long wave of reforms when the Hawke Federal Government enacted a paradigmatic shift in allowing other non-government organisations to offer courses alongside TAFE (Dawkins & Holding, 1987). The Hawke Government specifically cited economic goals for the reforms; that they would align the sector more closely with the labour market, increase accountability for the outcomes of training and prompt broader economic growth (Goozee, 2001). This agenda began to replace the Kangan philosophy and programs with a mandate more focused on economic competitiveness, accountability and efficient delivery (Ryan, 2011). As such, the government 'redefined VET as a "product" that was subject to the market forces of "supply" and "demand", driven respectively by the principles of "competition" and "choice"' (Anderson, 2006b). This reorganisation of vocational education from an economic rationalist perspective was common under the neoliberalist conception of the public service that rose to prominence in Western Democracies in the 1980s (examples in the Further Education Sector in the United Kingdom can be seen in Alexiadou (2001); Avis (2005); Avis et al. (2002)).

The origins of the economic rationalist perspective of vocational education can be traced to ideological contestation in the political field. Public choice theory, as an aspect of neoliberalism, suggested that individuals were fundamentally self-interested and that relying on public servants to work selflessly for the public good was naïve (Le Grand, 2003). Rather, it posited that the only reason that humans are inclined to serve the interests of others is when motivated by the exchange of goods that is mutually beneficial – ie. through market incentives. Le Grand (2003) suggests that in the past 'knightly' behaviour was expected of public servants, whereas their actions would be better understood if they were presumed to be 'knavish' in motivation. This reconceptualization of the motives of public servants became increasingly influential among the public choice school of economists and political scientists,

as well as policy makers and governments. The low status and limited autonomy of vocational education resulted in it being a prime testing ground for governments allured by public choice theory. Importantly, some of the central premises of these economic ideals clashed with the previous values of the sector established by the Kangan reforms. This new understanding was particularly hard for teachers to reconcile as it appeared to be in direct contradiction with the values of the Kangan report, in which teachers were expected, and trusted, to carry out holistic ideas of education for the benefit of their students. This clash in values made teachers feel undermined, deprofessionalized and disrespected (Hodge, 2016). This new understanding of teachers is reflected in two major policy shifts in the sector: the introduction of competency-based training and the rise of the auditing culture.

Competency-Based Training (CBT) was a new framework for understanding vocational education that was incorporated in the sector in the 1990s. This new framework for designing curriculum and assessment emerged out of Cold War America and quickly spread across industries and educational settings. It involves a focus on practice (rather than on a discipline or subject) and the breakdown and representation of the target practice into multiple component demonstrable, assessable parts (Hodge, 2016). It has often been used as a mechanism by which parties beyond education such as government, regulators and business can influence what is being taught in educational settings by determining the central competencies required of a worker (Hodge, 2016). Integrating CBT into curriculum creation for VET was a central tenet of reforms to vocational education in the early 1990s in Australia, and adapting to this educational framework is identified as one of the challenges of working as a VET teacher (Schmidt, 2017). Teachers emphasised that they felt CBT represented a radical change in the way they conceptualised and undertook their work (Conford, 1997). The major concern was that CBT would prompt training to focus purely on the development of skills without the underpinning theoretical knowledge. Teachers felt this was incompatible with the educational values established in the Kangan report (Allen Consulting Group, 1994). The contrast between the values of the Kangan report and these heteronomous values embodied in CBT was encapsulated by long-time educator and TAFE NSW managing director between 1991 and 1995 Gregor Ramsey who stated that he wanted

TAFE certified plumbers to be fully literate, numerate and understand the concept of gravity, as well as competent at fitting pipes (Shreeve & Palser, 2018).[9]

The scepticism of the benevolence of teachers was further evident through the heightened prevalence of auditing culture. Auditing in the public sector can be defined as 'the use of business derived concepts of independent supervision to measure and evaluate performance by public employees and agencies' (Leys, 2003). The rise of 'audit culture' is one of the central tenets of neoliberal reforms that has been incorporated into the public service across liberal, Western nations (Owczarzak, Broaddus, & Pinkerton, 2016). These concepts were enacted in vocational education during the 1990s through requiring teachers to demonstrate the ability of their teaching to meet the requirements of Training Packages and the use of quantitative measures to evaluate teacher performance (Black & Reich, 2010). Similar policies were implemented at the same time in the UK Further Education sector (Avis, 2005). It has been suggested that VET has been the target of such auditing scrutiny due to its low status within the field of education (Hodkinson, 2008). Seddon (2009a) outlined how this audit culture led to the increased focus on the agendas of industry and government, while the perspectives of teachers were sidelined. Research has also suggested that this new audit culture, in addition to adding substantial amounts of administration time, hampers teachers' creativity and willingness to implement innovative educational practices (Black & Reich, 2010).

Both the educational and economic conceptions of vocational education have acted to shape the values and principles of the field at large. While policies in the sector appear to have been increasingly directed by economic rationalist concerns, the educationalist perspective does still have substantial influence within the field. A number of studies have demonstrated that a wide range of teachers, and managers, within the field embrace these values and use them to inform their practice (Black & Bee, 2018; Coffield et al., 2007; Foley, 2011; Martin, 2012). A key takeaway from this, is that the marketization reforms of 2015 were inserted into a field with heavily contested values, where different groups would interpret them in substantively different ways.

---

[9] The uptake of CBT can be framed as part of broader shift in the sector to the increasing focus on 'skills' at the expense of 'knowledge', a shift that has been explored in depth by Corbel (2016)

4.2.4 The state of the VET field pre-reforms

To bring together the above, the vocational education field in Australia has developed its own specific values, principles and ways of working over its substantial history. While the contemporary field has limited insulation from the fields of politics and business, this was not always the case. In the period following the creation of TAFE in the 1970s the field developed its own principles and ways of working, independent from business. Since this period the autonomy of the field gradually decreased as successive reforms weakened the boundaries of the field. A second feature of the field is the substantial diversity of providers operating within it, with TAFE, community organisations, private colleges, industry associations, universities and schools all delivering courses in the sector. This was shown to be a recent feature of the field, as historically TAFE had been the primary provider within the field. The beliefs and principles operating in the field have also shifted over time. The Kangan reforms established the initial guiding principles of the sector, embracing an educational conception of the field, valorising the goals of improving educational quality and social justice within society. These deep-seated principles have come under challenge from economic rationalist conceptions of the sector, which have been adopted and incorporated within successive state and federal government reforms. The result of this is a field with heavily contested values, bifurcating the field between agents oriented towards educational and non-educational principles.

4.3   THE NATURE OF THE REFORMS

The focus of this thesis is the 2015 *Smart and Skilled* reforms introduced in NSW. These reforms stemmed from an earlier federal government initiative to encourage states to 'open up' their vocational education markets. At the 2009 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meetings the Rudd Labor Federal Government promoted a training agenda focusing on student entitlement to subsidised places, income-contingent loans for VET study and opening up funding in the sector to a contestable market of diverse providers. Additionally, the COAG meetings recommended the reduction of barriers that hindered TAFE institutes and other providers from competing in interstate markets (Guthrie & Clayton, 2010). While in the past many student places in VET courses were capped based on government priorities and skills forecasts, this open-market system would have uncapped places for qualifications, with decentralized funding allocations based on student demand (Polidano, 2012). This

policy direction was first embraced by the Victorian Training Guarantee which was implemented in 2009 and opened up the VET market in Victoria to a much wider range of private providers (Shreeve & Palser, 2018). Other states slowly followed with their own implementations of this policy, with NSW being the final state to enact it, through its *Smart and Skilled* reforms of 2015. This policy effectively created an individual student entitlement (i.e. a voucher-based system) in which students could choose from a wide range of providers from within the vocational education market. Furthermore, course costs were uncapped as students now had access to government education loans making expensive courses more viable for students, resulting in the cost of many qualifications increasing substantially.

These government education loans, operationalized as *VET FEE-HELP*, interacted in tandem with *Smart and Skilled* to promoting the opening of the VET market. Initially proposed by the Bradley review (2008) into higher education VET FEE-HELP was the extension of the income-contingent student loan scheme from higher education into the vocational education sector. In effect, this allowed students to take out interest-free government loans for the costs of vocational education qualifications. While it was gradually rolled out across VET since 2010, the opening up of the training market to private providers caused the use of this loan program to spike dramatically as these providers took advantage of the demand-side funding of the new marketplace (Yu & Oliver, 2015). This is demonstrated by total VET-FEE help loans growing from $25 million in 2009 to $2.9 billion in 2015 (Dodd, 2016).[10] The VET FEE-HELP program was renamed the VET Student loans program in 2017 in the aftermath of a number of scandals involving private providers manipulating the system for profit.

This section will outline how these external policies were incorporated into the existing vocational education field. This will be done through evaluating how they have impacted the three features of the field outlined in the previous section: external relations, internal structure and beliefs.

4.3.1 Contemporary external relations

The restructuring of the VET sector fundamentally increased the permeability between the economic field and vocational education, in encouraging more private providers to enter the

---

[10] All monetary values in the thesis are in Australian dollars

sector. However, this additionally affected the field's relationship with the political sphere, as the influx of providers into the newly opened market created regulatory difficulties for the field. The sector became embroiled in scandal as profit-motivated providers began running courses that were delivered in a quarter of the time they were previously delivered by TAFE, were run 100% online and aggressively recruited un-prepared students (Bachelard et al., 2015; Yu & Oliver, 2015). In response to media publicity surrounding these colleges, ASQA reworked and strengthened the regulatory framework of the field, resulting in higher standards for teachers demonstrating the validity of their work in preparation for potential audits. This provided the political sphere more oversight within the field, providing an additional policy lever for directing reform within the sector. This new regulatory framework has become a central feature of the field.

This political control was reinforced by additional restructuring of TAFE NSW, with its structure centralised in the wake of marketization reforms. While previously TAFE NSW was divided into ten regional institutes which competed with each other, this was amalgamated into one centralised bureaucracy run under the 'OneTAFE' moniker. At the same time, TAFE's relationship with the government shifted; instead of operating as part of the Department of Education and Training, it was now within the ambit of the Department of Industry. This could be understood as a fundamental reframing of the government's understanding of the role of VET, however vocational education has long occupied an uneasy position in terms of government responsibility. TAFE NSW was separated from the department that ran public schools in 1949 and until the 1980s was a separate, conventional government department. The Scott Report (1990) recommended the termination of TAFE as a government department, replacing it with a TAFE commission made up of the decentralised network of institutes. In 1995 the TAFE commission was absorbed into a newly-created government department, the Department of Training and Educational Co-ordination (DTEC), with two of the institutes separately renamed Institutes of Technology (Chappell, 1999a). By December 1997, DTEC had been abolished and TAFE was subsumed under the amalgamated Department of Education and Training, reversing the separation of 1949.[11] This suggests that while political control may have tightened in recent years, this shifting relationship does not

---

[11] In all these cases governmental reshufflings were justified in terms of eliminating duplication and allocating more resources to frontline students and teaching (Shreeve & Palser, 2018).

reflect a fundamental change in the sector, but rather a continuation of the recurring theme of political turbulence and continuous change.

4.3.2 Contemporary internal structure

With the introduction of profit motives, a substantial number of private providers began to enter the sector, altering its internal structure and the distribution of resources in the field. The profit motives involved were substantial, with some institutions recording profit margins between 30-40% (Yu & Oliver, 2015). The biggest shift caused by the marketization reforms has been the increasing market share of these private providers in the sector. TAFEs share of the VET market nationwide has decreased from 76.9% in 2009 to 59.2% in 2018 of government subsidized vocational students (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2018a). This is mirrored in NSW, where there has been a decrease in student numbers in the TAFE and community sectors, while the private sector has grown substantially (see Table 4.2).

	2010	2017
TAFE	312.6	263.9
community	51.1	18.6
Private providers	103.4	140.6

Table 4.2. Student numbers of different VET providers in NSW ('000s)[12]

The changing market also encouraged more integration between educational sectors, further altering the structure of the field. Universities are increasingly offering lower-level diplomas as pathway programs, while schools have begun to offer VET qualifications (Wheelahan, Arkoudis, Moodie, Fredman, & Bexley, 2012). While traditionally TAFE has offered qualifications between Australian Qualifications Framework levels 1 (certificate 1) and 6 (advanced diploma), in recent years they have expanded to offer degree and graduate diploma level qualifications (AQF level 7 and 8). 23 of the 43 TAFE regions in Australia have begun to deliver traditionally higher education qualifications, even though most of this provision is

---

[12] Data gathered from (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2017).

at a small scale and often occurring in partnership with universities (Wheelahan, 2016). Part of the reason for this is that qualification inflation has meant that TAFE now need to offer higher-level qualifications if it is to continue to train people for the same occupations (Wheelahan et al., 2012). TAFE has embraced this change in the qualifications they offer to increasingly brand themselves as an institution within higher education (Wheelahan et al., 2012) to trade on the cultural capital held by universities which has strong appeal in domestic and international markets (Heaney, Ryan, & Heaney, 2010).

Finally, the introduction of a competitive market in vocational education, prompted the expansion of new businesses aimed at providing support services to this market. These new arrangements, primarily brokering and subcontracting, introduced new actors to the field. Private RTOs began subcontracting third-party organisations to undertake various components of the 'supply chain' such as student recruitment, course content development and teaching (Yu & Oliver, 2015). The advantage of this was that these subcontractors were outside the oversight authority of ASQA and thus did not have to uphold standards in regards to teaching and resources. In response to the demand for students, brokering companies were established who would use targeted marketing to enrol students with partnered training providers, in exchange for a portion of their government training subsidy. These companies were accused of using aggressive strategies, such as targeting welfare recipients and the elderly, while also misinforming those they enrolled that the courses would be free, when in reality they would accrue debts of up to $20 000 per year with the government (ABC News, 2017). These brokering corporations became new institutions within the VET field, providing services adjacent to actual educating.

4.3.3 Contemporary beliefs in the field

The *Smart and Skilled* reforms appeared to embrace and embody a more economically-oriented understanding of vocational education. This can be understood as continuing the pre-existing trend within the field in giving primacy to economic goals and ways of working. This is highlighted by the increase in 'choice' rhetoric, the promotion of consumerism and the diminishing of educational capital in the sector.

The reforms introduced the economic principle of market-based customer choice as a structuring force in the field. The vocational market was intended to motivate providers in the

sector to be more flexible and responsive to customer concerns. The Minister who oversaw the *Smart and Skilled* reforms, Ian Macfarlane, championed the power of choice to minimize the 'wastage in the system' and 'increase efficiency' (Ross, 2014). This focus on consumer choice sat uneasily with some of the educational values of the sector; the goals of providing holistic and well-rounded education to students would often come into conflict with students' goals of completing qualifications as quickly as possible. Furthermore, the social justice goals of vocational education were often undermined by this rhetoric of choice as it is based on the premise that parents and students are all equally informed, politically connected and capable of securing the best education (Bartlett et al., 2002). Studies have suggested that 'choice increasing' policies often have unintended effects such as increasing racial and class stratification in education (Molnar, 1996; Reay, Davies, David, & Ball, 2001), coming into direct conflict with the egalitarian principles established for the sector in the Kangan reforms.

The increase in fees prompted by the introduction of the *Smart and Skilled* reforms has been argued to have increased consumerism in the sector, fundamentally altering the student-teacher relationship. While most courses at TAFE used to have a nominal cost to the individual, students now pay up to $15000 a year for their qualification (Yu & Oliver, 2015). In addition, international students, who have always paid higher fees, have made up an increasingly larger percentage of the student body due to institutions targeting those students (Nakar, 2016), with total international enrolments increasing from 126600 in 2014 to 186300 in 2017 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2018b). A potential issue of this consumerism is it may change the mindset of students, as they increasingly view themselves as consumers, rather than learners, altering the dynamic of the relationships they have with their educational institution and educators (McCulloch, 2009). McCulloch (2009) further argues that students begin to view the educational experience as a product, rather than a process, which enables passive behaviour as they believe they have purchased the qualification and TAFE has a responsibility to deliver it to them. This alters the hierarchy within the field, as teachers were previously constructed as purveyors of knowledge and expertise, whereas now they are viewed as providing an educational service to the customer.

This reorientation of the field towards the values of business altered the dominant form of capital in the field, diminishing the position of educators. Private providers have been critiqued for employing underqualified teachers to deliver VET content (ABC News, 2017). Due to this, the mandatory level of qualification for teachers began to re-emerge as an issue,

although the question of how to provide industry professionals with the pedagogic skills to teach in VET had been debated since the formalisation of the sector (Tertiary Education Commission, 1978). In the initial period after the Kangan report there was a strong movement towards a mandated, specifically vocational, education qualification pitched at the advanced diploma level (Harris, 2017). During this period a wide array of universities began offering these courses in VET teacher education, while TAFE NSW maintained this standard by requiring all permanent teacher to hold a Bachelor or Graduate Diploma in Adult Education (E. Smith & Yasukawa, 2017). Teachers would often complete this while they were working for TAFE. During this period there was a push from the teachers union to raise the level of the qualification to mandate that all VET teachers hold bachelor's degrees (Guthrie, 2010). However, the Productivity Commission (2011) inquiry into the VET workforce recommended the opposite of this, suggesting that the lower level Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA) formed an appropriate qualification for VET practitioners. This was despite the report acknowledging that this qualification did not always equip teachers with the skills to deliver VET effectively, did not cover all the roles teachers were asked to perform and that concerns about the quality of delivery of the course were 'long standing, persistent and supported by recent audit evidence' (p. 247). Few reasons were provided to adequately justify moving from a higher level of mandated qualification to a lower one (Guthrie & Clayton, 2010). This low minimum level of qualification has led to a wider array of providers offering the TAA, and universities increasingly discontinuing their offerings (for example, University of Technology Sydney, University of Wollongong and Monash University all ended their programs in recent years). The low level of regard for VET teachers' skills displayed by having such a minimal qualification as the barrier to entry, and questionable quality of those qualifications themselves, reinforces the diminishing value of pedagogic capital in the sector.

4.3.4 Continuing the trajectory of the field

The *Smart and Skilled* reforms appear to be a continuation of the trajectory of the field outlined in section 4.2. While previous efforts to introduce economic incentives to the sector were largely marketization rhetoric, current reforms appeared to be initiating substantial change in the sector. They increased the prevailing trajectory of the field towards the integration of VET with the field of industry and politics, decreasing the autonomy of the field. As a direct result of these reforms the sector became increasingly diversified, with

smaller private providers increasing their market share of the sector substantially. The reforms additionally increased the prevalence and primacy of economic understandings of vocational education within the sector. In summary, the reforms accelerated existing trajectories in the field, shifting to a more economically-oriented sector. This leads to the question of how agents within the sector conceived of these reforms and reacted to the continuation of this trajectory, which will be addressed in the following section.

4.4   THE EFFECTS OF REFORMS

The 2015 reforms aimed to reorient and restructure the field, shifting the principles of hierarchization and destabilising the traditional actors in the field. These traditional actors across the field have challenged these changes in order to maintain their dominant positions. This section will explore this contestation by examining the responses of different players within the field. It will focus on responses to reforms by those in the sector, drawing on the documentary analysis of public commentary on reforms as well as survey data of TAFE teachers, in order to explore how the external relations, internal structure and beliefs in the field have changed due to the marketization reforms.

4.4.1   Effects on external relations

Since the initial process of opening the VET market to private providers began in the 1980s, Australian academic VET commentary has been generally sceptical of the proclaimed benefits of this process. While there has been an acknowledgement of its ability to reduce public costs, increase choice and provide flexibility (Anderson, 2006b; Schofield, 2000), a larger body of literature is critical of the higher transaction costs of the market (Anderson, 2006b), likely decrease in educational quality (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2010) and failure to deliver the skills necessary for working in industry (J. Mitchell, 2012). Academics in the field highlighted the tension between business imperatives and quality training in the VET sector (Harris & Simons, 2012). A number of problematic, profit-motivated behaviours of private providers were highlighted as contributing to decreased educational quality, for example their less rigorous student entry requirements, significantly shorter duration of courses and the lower levels of qualifications held by teachers (Halliday-Wynes & Misko, 2013).

The academics' concerns proved prescient as the mass entry of private providers into the field was calamitous. Both academic and media coverage of the reforms focused on the narrative of these for-profit private VET providers which were frequently described as 'dodgy' (E. Smith, 2010; Tran & Nyland, 2013) or 'shonky'(Malone, 2015), and reports linked these colleges to declining academic standards (Pasura, 2014). Media coverage focused on many of the questionable practices of these 'dodgy' providers, highlighting aggressive marketing strategies where students were offered incentives such as laptops and iPads to sign up for 'free' courses. The students were not informed of the VET-FEE HELP debt they were accruing with federal government. In targeting marginalised groups, such as refugees and welfare recipients, with courses involving minimal contact hours and substantial online components, the completion rates of many providers were very low (Tomazin, 2018). Furthermore, as many of these disadvantaged students would never meet the minimum income threshold for repayment, it was estimated that up to 40% of loans would never be repaid (Malone, 2015). Notably, these problematic practices were not limited to private providers; numerous TAFE colleges have failed audits due to adopting private sector practices in order to remain viable and compete in the VET market (Harmsen, 2018). Ultimately an investigative report by a major Australian newspaper on the 'rorting'[13] of the VET system described it as the 'biggest get-rich quick scheme in Australia' (Bachelard et al., 2015). This 'rorting' of the Australian VET system by private providers has tarnished the reputation of 'Brand Australia' in the international VET market, which forms a substantial proportion of the sector (Wheelahan, 2013). Zoellner (2016) highlights that these reforms shifted how vocational education was understood by society at large, being considered part of the economic, rather than the educational field. As evidence of this he points coverage of VET in major newspapers in Australia increasingly shifting from the education section to the business section.

The VET practitioners understood the *Smart and Skilled* changes as evidence of the increasing political influence on the sector, describing the reforms as originating from outside vocational education. They characterized the changes as being initiated by external agents: 'people who know ABSOLUTELY NOTHING about how to run education' (respondent 48). These external agents were understood to be shifting the values of the sector, to the chagrin of teachers who were long-term occupants of the sector, creating conflict between teachers

---

[13] 'Rorting' is common Australian slang to fraudulently manipulate.

and the instigators of change, as respondent 17 illustrates, 'I think that the organisation is more focused on money and less on students. My focus has not changed and this has put me in conflict with management of my organization on many occasions'. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 indicate that teachers largely felt that it was difficult to adapt to the changes, both for themselves and for other teachers within TAFE. This struggle to adapt to changes, can potentially be explained by the teachers' negative perception of reforms, as respondent 29 illustrated in charactering the reforms as the 'Total destruction of TAFE… being a witness to the demise of a once wonderful organization that had the capacity to really change the lives of the disadvantaged'. As such, the teachers felt that the increasing political influence on the field was having a substantial impact on the practices of the field, and that they were having difficulty adapting to these new practices.
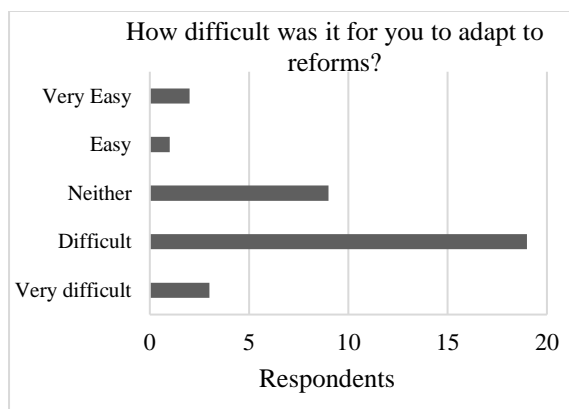
Figure 4.1. Teachers' difficulty in adapting to reforms
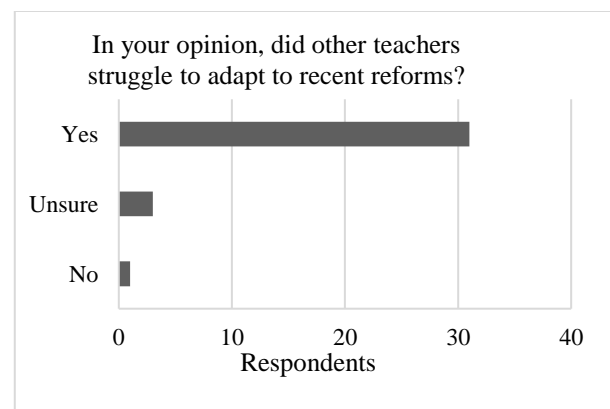
Figure 4.2. Other teachers' difficulty in adapting to reforms

4.4.2   Effects on internal structure

A number of economic analyses have examined the costs of shifting the internal structure of the field by allowing private providers to enter the sector. Toner (2014) draws on the transaction cost economics framework to examine how features of the vocational education sector make it an inefficient market for contracting out VET provision. This is primarily because it fails the assumption of having a 'rational consumer' due to the complexity of the market and the difficulty in judging educational products before they are experienced. Finally, he suggests that private VET provision is particularly susceptible to lowering the quality of education due to these factors. Yu and Oliver (2015) investigated how this played

out in practice, providing a broad-scale examination of the transfer of public wealth to the private sector due to the combination of marketization and the VET-Fee help scheme. They concluded that private providers successfully manipulated the policy environment to extract large amounts of subsidies from the government, while delivering minimal meaningful training to students (Yu & Oliver, 2015). The cost of the VET loan scheme rose from $709 million in 2013, to $1.6 billion in 2015 resulting in politicians from both major parties condemning aspects of the policy (Malone, 2015), and resulting in policy alterations to fix the 'widely rorted' system (Grattan, 2016).

One of the major impacts of the reforms was to increase the onus on the regulator in the sector, which has responded by becoming more active in monitoring the behaviour of providers. Before the reforms ASQA was monitoring the activity of providers in the sector, however their audits did not usually have substantial consequences in the field. However, the increasing prominence of profit-motived institutions in the sector, and the media coverage of some of their problematic practices resulted in ASQA becoming a more prominent organisation within the field. Prior to 2011 ASQA typically cancelled the registration of less than five training providers each year across Australia (Korbel & Misko, 2016). With the expansion of the VET market this rose to 227 in 2015 (Korbel & Misko, 2016).

The increasing variegation in the structure of the field has been mirrored in the substantial diversity of the TAFE workforce, in terms of types of employment, duration of employment and identity. Teachers in vocational education are a mix of full-time 'career' teachers, part-time and casual teachers who are attempting to develop a teaching career but are unable to secure a permanent position, and part-time and casual staff who wish to retain work in their chosen occupation whilst also teaching (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). Due to industry currency being a prerequisite to gaining employment in the sector, it is natural that most TAFE teachers move into vocational education from industry and maintain their ties with industry while working for TAFE. This effects teachers' connection to education as many still maintain an identity with their vocational profession (Fejes & Köpsén, 2012) and are actively encouraged to do so within TAFE policy. Ultimately, this means that many teachers feel a split in their professional identity between current vocational practitioner and expert educator; teachers reside variously along this spectrum (Guthrie, 2010). Further, due to the expansion of areas VET encompasses the range of contexts that TAFE teachers work in is broad - teaching cookery to accounting, interior design to bush regeneration. The increased

focus on work-place delivery adds further variation as learning is now delivered in hospitals, hotels, nationals parks as well as traditional classrooms. This diversity in educational backgrounds, types of teaching and relevant skills means that the day-to-day experiences of VET educators is diverse and divergent, requiring them to have different skills depending on where they will be working. As such, the sector is highly diversified, resulting in a strongly variegated field, with a large range of values and positions embraced.

However, there is only a limited amount of data on the demographic details of the VET workforce in Australia. Researchers in the sector frequently lament the lack of good data on the personal characteristics, qualifications and dynamics of the VET workforce (Guthrie, 2010).[14] The little data available suggests that TAFE is characterised by an aged and highly casualized workforce (Nechvoglod, Mlotkowski, & Guthrie, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2011) and that casual staff are not well supported and they do not have access to the same level of professional development as full time teachers in the sector (Guthrie & Clayton, 2010). The workforce is predominantly mature-aged as in order to enter the occupation one must have substantial industry experience, thus it is inherently a second or subsequent career (Tyler & Dymock, 2017). This more mature workforce is an important consideration within this study, as the TAFE teachers' substantial experience in the sector may be important for how they interpret changes to it.

The survey reflects the diversity of areas taught within TAFE, as well as the length of experience of its teachers, that were highlighted earlier in this chapter. These teachers were recruited for the study through TAFE's Sydney region via email. Forty nine teachers completed the survey. The average age of the respondents was 53 and they had on average 20 years teaching experience within TAFE. The age of the teachers was similar to the national average for vocational education teachers of fifty years old (Australian Government, 2019), however more experienced teachers appeared to be overrepresented in the sample, as only 24.0% of teachers in the sector have been employed for 20 years or more (Nechvoglod et al., 2010). 67% of the teachers in the survey were full-time teachers at TAFE, which is substantially higher than the 46.6% of teachers in TAFE as a whole who are full-time (Nechvoglod et al., 2010). This discrepancy can be somewhat explained by the fact that part-

---

[14] This should be improved by a forthcoming report, the national VET workforce survey, being conducted by NCVER in 2019.

time teachers are only paid to undertake administrative hours associated with their in-class teaching, meaning they are less likely to allocate time to completing voluntary research surveys. Full-time teachers have an allocation of hours each week to undertake a broad range of administrative duties. Figure 4.3 shows that the respondents came from a wide spread of teaching areas within TAFE, with the most frequent being 'technology and business services' and 'career pathways, aboriginal languages and employability skills'. The diversity of areas incorporated within the survey provides some of the concerns of a broad range of teachers in the sector.
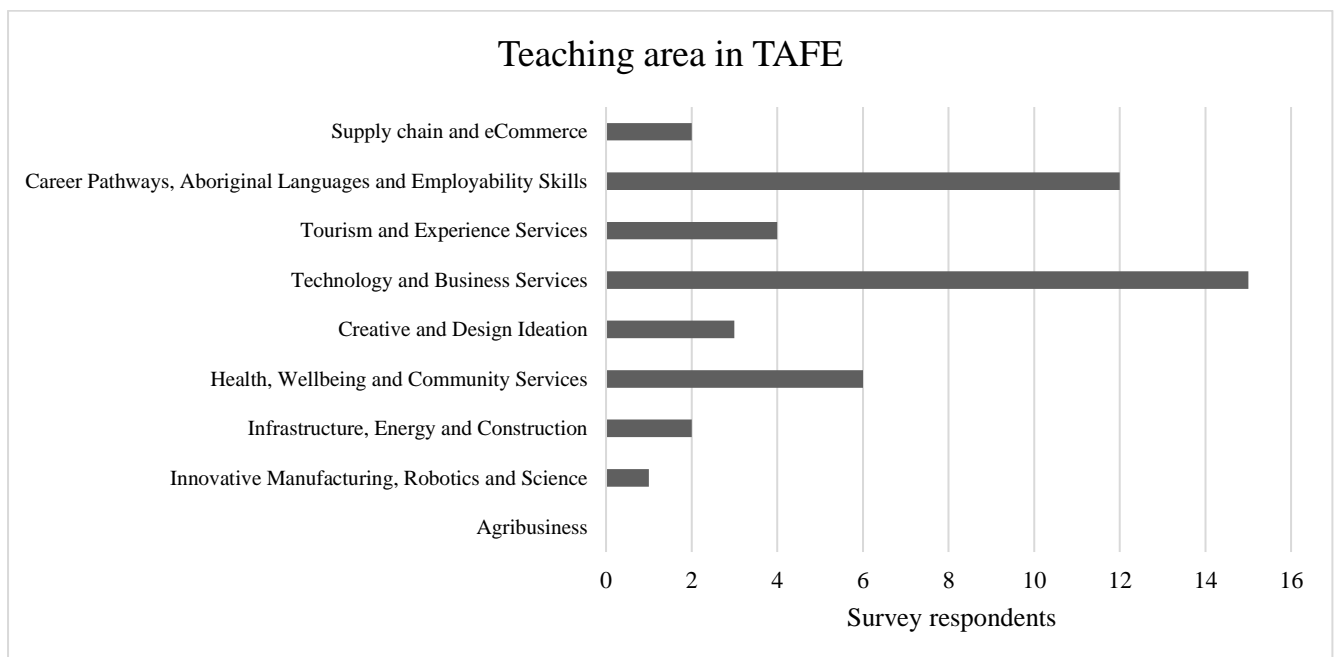
Figure 4.3. Teaching area of survey respondents

4.4.3   Effects on beliefs in the field

The teachers characterised the reforms as shifting the values and beliefs that underpinned the sector. They particularly emphasised the increasing primacy given to economic concerns in the field, often at the cost of educational outcomes. Two respondents characterised this as: 'Running TAFE as a business instead of focusing on the students & meeting their needs' (respondent 15) and 'the commercialization of education… a business model with a focus on economic return rather than on quality educational delivery' (respondent 38). Figure 4.4 indicates that fears concerning TAFE lowering its educational standards in response to these changing values was quite common among the teachers. As in the above responses, this embrace of economic values was connected to decreasing student support. Figure 4.5 shows that this was a widely held concern about the changing priorities within TAFE.
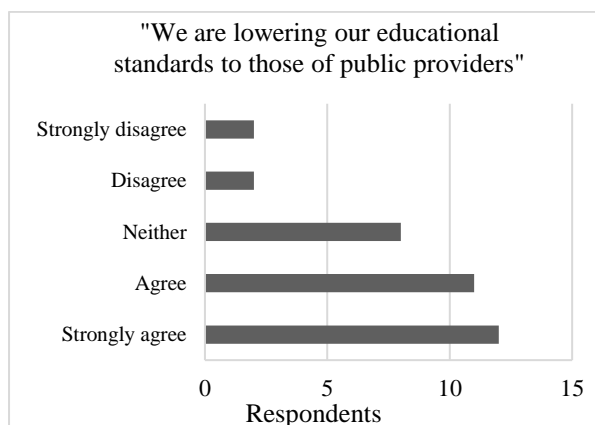
Figure 4.4. Teachers' agreement with diminishing educational standards
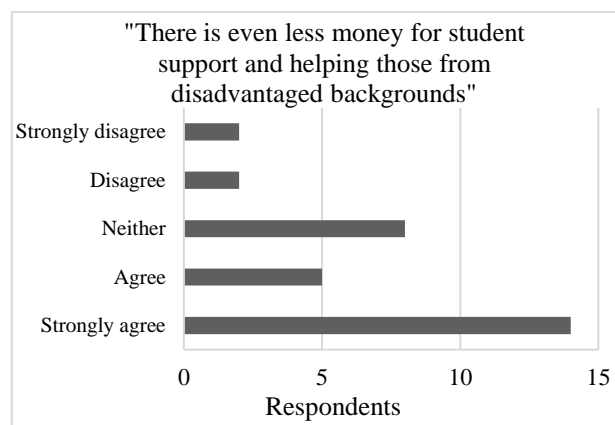
Figure 4.5. Teachers' agreement with less support for students

These shifting values were suggested to have a similar impact on the activities teachers performed as part of their work in VET, with increasing primacy given to economically-oriented tasks. The teachers continually reflected that teaching was de-emphasised part of their work, with one respondent suggesting TAFE had embraced 'Lower teaching standards and reduced face-to-face teaching hours'. Other participants suggested that the emphasis had shifted from these activities to more non-educationally focused tasks. For example, participant 11 identified more time spent on, 'administrative/compliance & budget requirements have taken away the focus from what should be my core role of improving the outcomes for my students', while participant 27 complained that, 'Administration/compliance has taken over as the majority of my work'. These additional roles resulted in the teachers feeling over-worked, respondent 3 explained this as TAFE 'expecting teachers to do more for less'. These general understandings of the changing role of teachers appeared to be echoed in the survey responses, with teachers largely agreeing with the statements 'I'm no longer just a teacher - I'm now also a business manager, a recruiter, and an administrator as well' and 'These days I'm doing less teaching or lesson planning and more admin and office work' (see Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7). This suggests that the feeling of being pressured to adopt an increasingly non-educational role was a common experience for TAFE teachers in the period since the marketization reforms.
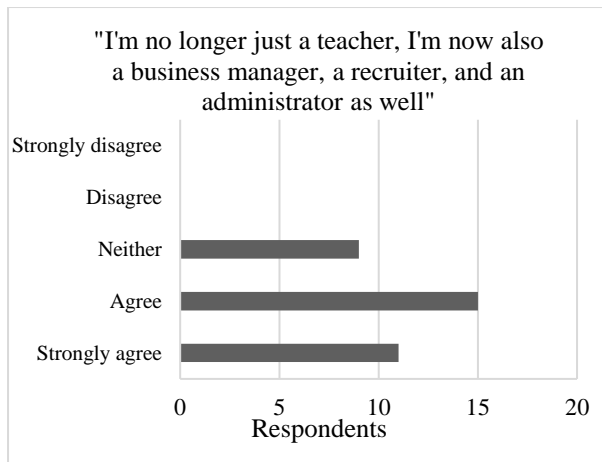
Figure 4.6. Teachers' agreement with increased diversity of roles
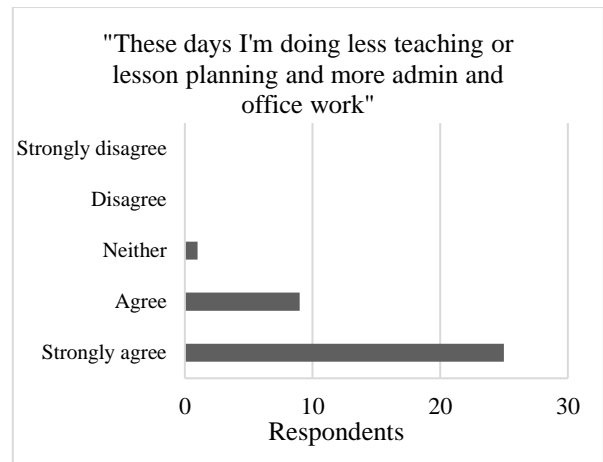
Figure 4.7. Teachers' agreement with increased focus on administration

As these new roles have increasingly taken up more of the teachers' time, teachers observed an equivalent shift in how TAFE management valued different parts of their roles. Figure 4.8 displays the teachers' rankings of what they felt TAFE valued in their teachers now, as compared to five years ago (when the initial preparation for the Smart and Skilled reforms began). The teachers perceived two major changes in what TAFE valued among its educators. First, that their teaching quality and ability to support students holistically was more valued five years ago. Second, that TAFE now values teachers' business savvy and ability to meet compliance requirements more highly. This largely reflects the understanding gained from the teachers in the interviews and was also reinforced by their responses in the open-ended questions: respondent 25 suggests that in TAFE's evaluation of teachers 'there is a focus on compliance and achieving completions, with less focus on quality of teaching and learning' while respondent 49 suggested that the ability 'to "sell" ourselves to various services and businesses' became increasingly important.
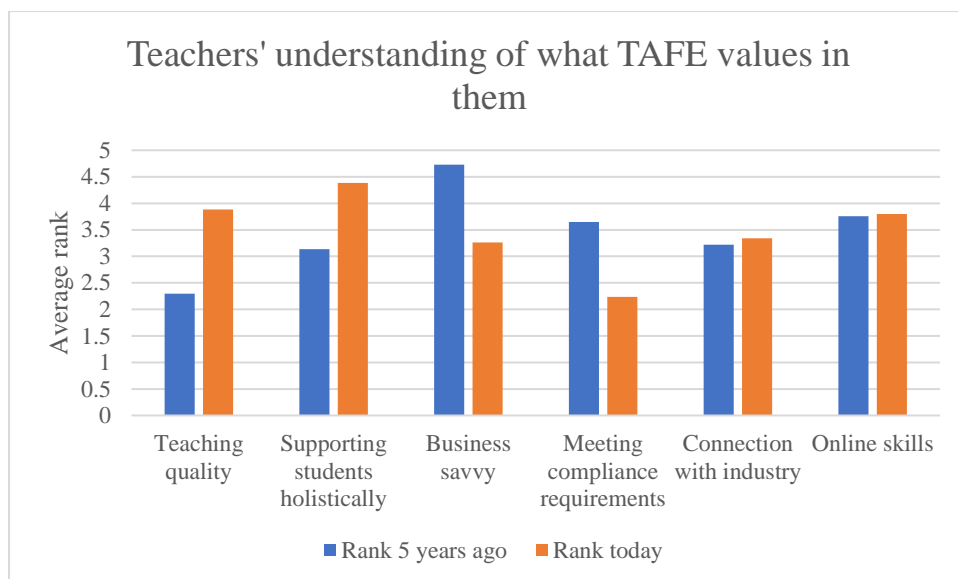
Figure 4.8. Teachers' ranking of what TAFE values in them[15]

4.4.4 Broad responses to reforms

Both the public commentary and teacher surveys indicated that reforms had originated outside of vocational education and had a substantial impact on vocational education. Section 4.4.1 demonstrated how those within the sector described the reforms as shifting the boundaries of the vocational education field, repositioning the field as more closely aligned with business than education. These changing boundaries created issues, as actors were increasingly uncertain if they were inside or outside the field. Section 4.4.2 displayed increasing diversity in the internal structure of the field, as private providers became increasingly prevalent in the sector, garnering a larger share of public funding. The practices of these private providers were shown to be substantially different to the public providers in the sector, necessitating an increased involvement from the government regulator in the field. The increasing diversity of actors within the field was also seen through the wide range of teaching areas within the survey. Finally, in section 4.4.3 the teachers outlined how the reforms had shifted the values and principles of the field, emphasising economic goals at the cost of educational outcomes. They framed these goals both as being in competition with each other, and mutually incompatible.

Bringing together the above, the findings from section 4.4.1 demonstrated that the actors within the field has concerns about the shifting boundaries of the field and their position

---

[15] Note: Teachers ranked these options in priority order, as such a lower rank indicates a higher priority.

within it. The findings from section 4.4.3 suggest that the teachers had a particular issue with introduction of economic goals to the field, turning them away from their traditional educational purposes. This suggests that to further examine the teachers' concerns in more depth, analytical tools are needed that are able to conceptualise both position and purpose within the field of vocational education. As outlined in Chapter 3.3, autonomy codes from LCT offer such an approach, with *positional autonomy* reflecting the positioning of actors and institutions within the field, while *relational autonomy* reflecting whether practices are oriented to the autonomous purposes of the field. These concepts will be applied when examining the case studies in Chapters 5-7.

4.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to present an illustration of the field of vocational education upon which marketization reforms were being enacted. Over its substantial history vocational education in Australia has developed its own structure and values, replete with specific practices and ways of working. These combine to form what Bourdieu described as the 'refraction coefficient' of the field, which distorts external changes to have unintended results within the sector. As such, rather than government policy acting as an unmediated external force on the field, it is altered and re-worked by the beliefs and ways of working of VET. This 'refraction coefficient' is thereby important to consider when examining how reforms are implemented within the sector. In order to examine this 'refraction coefficient', the external relations, internal structure and beliefs in the field were explored in the first section of this chapter. Following this the reforms themselves were explained, along with how they impacted these central principles and values of the vocational education field. Finally, the responses to reforms, both in terms of academic and media commentary, and by VET practitioners themselves, were included to demonstrate how the changes played out within the field. However, while this gave a big-picture perspective on the changes, it was a limited and largely homogenous one. The diversity of the VET field in Australia, which was highlighted throughout the chapter, has resulted in a highly variegated field, with different positions being taken and specific principles operating in different areas. This raises the question of whether this diversity of the field has resulted in different areas within it conceiving of, and responding to, marketization reforms in various ways.

To more fully explore the impacts of the changes on TAFE teachers the following chapters will dive deeper into various areas within the field to examine whether the homogenous response to reform outlined within this chapter holds true across these different areas. The three areas represent varying positions within the field, providing a broad range of understandings and responses. Chapter 5 will examine nursing education. This teaching area is a relatively recent entrant to vocational education, with its teachers having substantial educational backgrounds and an associated industry that is largely oriented towards humanist, rather than economic goals. Chapter 6 will focus on trades educators. This group is similarly long-term occupants of the field; however, the trades are more economically-focussed with the principles of business underpinning the sector. Finally, Chapter 7 will examine hospitality teaching. This represents a more recent addition to the field, with its associated industry also commercially oriented.

CHAPTER 5 - NURSING EDUCATION: CARERS IN EDUCATION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

As Chapter 4 has demonstrated, the field of vocational education in Australia is complex, with different institutions and guiding principles rising to prominence throughout its history, resulting in a highly variegated field. While Chapter 4 provided a broader perspective of how actors within the field have experienced and interpreted marketization reforms, the variegated nature of the field may result in universally-applied reforms having different effects on different positions within it. To investigate this, three case study areas within VET with different histories, dispositions and trajectories will be analysed in regards to how teachers characterize and understand the effects of marketization reforms. This chapter will begin to analyse the impact of marketization reforms on the first of these specific sections within the field: nursing education. Nursing education is reflective of a particular position within the wider VET field. It is a recent entrant in the field, becoming incorporated in the sector in the 1980s, however the area has a longstanding educational tradition, with all teachers having received tertiary education.

In-depth interviews with these teachers reveal their characterization of reforms, as well as their experiences of the local, 'on the ground' effects of the reforms. As Chapter 4 identified the shifting boundaries and purposes of the field as important factors in the teachers' concerns about reforms, these will be enacted in analysis of this chapter through the use of the 'autonomy codes' from LCT (more fully explained in Chapter 3.3.1). *Positional autonomy* is used to examine how the teachers locate themselves in relation to the field of vocational education, while *relational autonomy* explores what they understand as the purpose and goals of VET. These concepts will be enacted using the translation devices outlined in Chapter 3.7.2 (displayed in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2). As the nursing educators are regularly discussing their work as professional nurses, to avoid confusion, within this chapter 'nursing' will refer to their occupational work and 'nursing education' will refer to their *teaching* of nursing. In order to explore the nursing teachers' experiences of marketization reforms, first, the specific position and history of nursing education within the VET field will be examined. The nursing educators' conceptions of the sector and its purpose will then be

embedded within this wider perspective of nursing education. Following this, the chapter will focus on how the nursing educators characterize the origin and values embodied within marketization changes. Finally, the chapter will explore and examine the teachers' descriptions of the impacts of reforms.

PA	1st level	in this study:	2nd level	in this study:	example quote:
+ ↑	*target*	within vocational education field	*core*	purely teaching role (in class educational teaching & educational preparation)	'we find our happy time in the class talking about the industry and delivering content'
			ancillary	supporting educational roles surrounding teaching (administration, classroom discipline)	'there is a lot more filling out forms now – some of it seems like admin for the sake of admin'
↓ **−**	*non-target*	outside vocational education field	*associated*	organisational, but not educational, roles (compliance, course viability costing, connecting with industry)	'we have to spend a lot of time liaising and connecting with industry, which isn't really teaching'
			unassociated	non-educational roles (anything else)	'I had no experience as an entrepreneur or a marketer, and I was suddenly expected to sell'

Table 5.1. Translation device for positional autonomy

RA	1ˢᵗ level	In this study:	2ⁿᵈ level	In this study:	Example quote:
+ ↑	*target*	educational goals	*core*	purely educational goals (holistic student perspective, educational goals, knowledge and skills)	'if I've sent that person out now with more skills and knowledge than I had, I'm happy.'
			ancillary	supporting educational goals (employment outcomes, efficiency)	'people are coming to us to get jobs, so if we can set them up for employer that's perfect'
	non-target	non-educational goals	*associated*	goals organisational, but not educational (completion %, connecting with industry)	'we have to maintain a good completion percentage so that our course looks successful'
↓ **−**			*unassociated*	non-educational goals (anything else, e.g. profitability of courses)	'because courses are now dollar-driven, the easiest way to do that, is to increase class numbers and cut delivery hours…'

Table 5.2. Translation device for relational autonomy

5.2   NURSING TEACHERS' POSITION IN THE FIELD OF VET

Nursing teachers see themselves as occupying two social universes. They strongly identify as both nurses and educators, occupying positions in both fields. The practices of each field interact to shape this dual identity, and as such aspects of the nursing field structure their understandings of vocational education. The history of nursing and its connection with vocational education is therefore important for explaining the attitudes and values of the nursing educators. Due to this, the nursing fields' historical connection with vocational education will first be examined based on wider literature, before turning to how the teachers in the study understand their position within the field and their connection with nursing. These will be analysed in terms of *autonomy codes* before being brought together to discuss the organising principles of how they view nursing education in VET.

The complex nature of the nursing field has structured the development of nurse education. Within the health field, nursing occupies a low-status position lacking in autonomy and has been demonstrated as the health profession most afflicted by disaffection, fragmentation and negative identity (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, & Silber, 2002; Clinton & Hazelton, 2000; Fagin, 2001). However, they do have a structured sense of professional identity built around the specific practices of nursing (Woods, 2011). This professional identity is described as incorporating elements of 'art' and 'science', resulting in both being included within nursing education, underscored by a disposition of care (G. J. Mitchell & Cody, 2002; Nightingale, 1969). This ethic of care has been understood as based on relational practices of mutual recognition and realization, focusing on acknowledging and understanding patients and supporting them holistically (Drummond, 2003; Russell, 1990; Woods, 2011). This orients the profession to be highly patient-centric, with Benner (1989, p. 3) describing it as: 'the essence of caring as a nurse is that you recognize the value and worth of those you care for and that the patient and their experience matter to you'. In seeing itself as '*the* caring profession' this care-based ethic is central as the 'modus operandi of its practitioners' (Woods, 2011, p. 267). Nursing education has consistently focused on the importance of developing this ethic of care in students (Chen, Chang, & Pai, 2018; Gastmans, 2002; Vanlaere & Gastmans, 2007). This literature highlights the distinct values and knowledge base of nursing education, in having a more humanist than commercial ethos underpinning it. In order to develop and establish this disposition of care, nursing education initially had a specifically practical focus around interacting with patients. This was enacted through training within hospitals as part of the health system in an apprentice-based model involving hospital set exams (referred to as the 'Nightingale' model - Russell, 1990). During the 1980s, nursing qualifications were transferred from being delivered directly in hospitals to being delivered within the educational field. However, it was separated into two qualifications: The higher-level Registered Nursing qualification is taught in Australian universities as a three-year Bachelor of Nursing, and the lower level, two-year Diploma of Nursing, which qualifies individuals as Enrolled Nurses, is delivered in the VET sector.

The bifurcation between Enrolled and Registered Nurses is important for understanding the background of the nursing educators in the study. Within the healthcare system Enrolled Nurses will work under the guidance and responsibility of Registered Nurses (Jacob, Sellick, & McKenna, 2012). However, teachers of Enrolled Nursing must be qualified Registered

Nurses, necessitating a higher education qualification for all the teachers, unlike the other teaching areas in the study. This means that these teachers can also move into the tertiary sector to teach Registered Nursing (as one of the participants had previously done). As such, teachers in the sector can work between the VET sector, higher education sector and engaging in practical nursing in hospitals. The strict codification in teaching nursing has resulted in a highly institutionalized field, with a limited amount of educational institutions as the major actors in the field (Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia, 2019). The diploma of nursing was traditionally taught only at TAFEs, but in recent years several private providers have begun offering Enrolled Nursing qualifications, while it is still being taught at a large number of TAFE campuses. These private providers, as a recent change in the sector, act to challenge some of traditional alignments between the values of nursing and vocational education, as they embody the introduction of the profit motive into the sector, something alien to both of these fields.

5.2.1   In two worlds: Nursing teachers' view of their position

One of the most significant and salient features of the nursing educators' sense of themselves is their professional identity as nurses, and in particular their identity as *both* practising nurses *and* nurse educators. This reinforces the importance of the specific histories of nursing discussed above, as they drew on these understandings to inform their practice. Angela encapsulates the nursing educators' double positioning in describing her professional identity: 'I'm so passionate about aged care. I love it…when people ask me what I do, I say I'm a nurse… my job is a teacher, but I look at myself as a nurse'. This strong connection with professional nursing identity was a distinct difference with other teachers in the study (such as the trades teachers, see Chapter 6.2.1). The degree of identification varied among the teachers, with some such as Ilhan feeling this nursing connection passionately, 'I love my nursing too, I love my theatre nursing very much', while others tended towards an educationalist conception, 'I love the education component… I felt I could offer more from an education perspective' (Kylie). While the level of identification with nursing and education varies, this dual identity was a consistent feature among the nurse educators.

This connection with the nursing field was promoted by a regulatory requirement: to maintain their status as a Registered Nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia requires 90 hours every year of nursing practice. As the teachers within TAFE are all

Registered Nurses they maintain their registration with the board, working at various hospitals or nursing homes around Sydney on a regular basis. One participant suggested that many of the nurses exceeded the registration board's requirements, explaining: 'That works out to be one shift a month, if you really broke it down. But most people do one shift a week, or one shift a fortnight' (Camille). Comparatively, TAFE's benchmark for maintaining industry currency is that teachers spend 20 hours a year working in industry, a standard that the nurses substantially exceed. This can help explain the nursing educators' strong connection with nursing, as they all actively work within the healthcare system on a regular basis. This position of having a foot in both camps, leads to the question of how this dual identity may relate to their understandings of the goals and principles of nursing education.

5.2.2   Care in education: Nursing teachers' understanding of the goals of VET

The nursing educators' position in both worlds is discernible in how they understood vocational education. Their experience in nursing refracts their understanding of the values of VET and reinforces values shared in both fields. This is revealed through their focus on holistic caring for students and scepticism towards commercial motivations.

Teachers regularly emphasised in the interviews that providing holistic emotional support and guidance is a central part of their role as nurse educators. They reinforced the value of simply providing support for students, as Rebecca outlines:

> If you're accepting young people from other countries who are literally plonked
> here, out of choice, even though they have no idea what they're coming to. I think
> supporting them is very important, and I like doing that, so I'm quite happy to
> spend a bit of time doing it.

Teachers elaborated on how this mentoring aspect of the role was one that was rarely specifically identified or valued by TAFE management but that it took up a substantial amount of teachers' time and was part of the role they felt was important. Rebecca explains this when describing what she values within TAFE, in a way that reflects the ethic of care from nursing itself:

> Supporting students outside the classroom – and that's probably another thing
> that has changed, the amount of time that you spend counselling students, even
> though there is a counsellor, they don't want to see the counsellor, but they'll
> come and talk to you because they know you. You spend a lot of time doing that.

The time taken by teachers to do after-class student support is not factored into teachers' workloads, but when asked, all the nursing teachers felt it was a central part of their teaching. In willingly performing tasks for which they are not work-loaded the teachers illustrated their belief that this support is important. This attitude is also displayed in the way the nursing teachers discussed the student support services offered by TAFE, as Jennifer emphasises: 'I thought one of the beauties of TAFE was the support services that were provided. They were brilliant'. In valorising the provision of broad-ranging support for students, the teachers are endorsing a more expansive understanding of their role in education than simply training students in skills. This aligns them with many of the autonomous values of the field, embodied within the goals of the 1974 Kangan reforms (Chapter 4.2.3). This also draws on values from the nursing field, specifically the ethic of care in providing broad-ranging, holistic support for the individual.

Within their discussion of the purpose of nursing education, the teachers demonstrated a clear scepticism about the value of commercial motives in the sector. The teachers' close connections with the practice of nursing, which also treats commercial goals as distant from the primary focus of the field, may have reinforced this scepticism. The teachers connected the educationally questionable practices of private providers to their profit-driven motives, as Rebecca observed about a former, private employer: 'the biggest thing was that he was completely profit driven. He would try and cut corners wherever he could… its [TAFE] well regarded in the workplace because I think people realise that TAFE students are well prepared. It's a sound educational product'. Ilhan additionally emphasised the potential educational costs of this profit motive:

> Because it was a private RTO [Registered Training Organization] they had to run
> by a budget, so a lot of the time equipment wasn't fully available for all students
> to use, and that sort of issue, which is a big issue for nursing, because it is a
> practical profession... It hinders your teaching with them.[16]

Both Rebecca and Ilhan express frustration at dealing with the tension between profit motives and educational quality on an everyday basis, as well as highlighting the educational costs for students. In denigrating the commercially-focused values of the private providers, the teachers distanced themselves from these principles, which were foreign to both parts of their

---

[16] While RTO is a generic term for all providers of vocational education, it was generally used by the teachers to describe private providers.

dual identity, while at the same time valorising the educational goals they perceived TAFE as traditionally embodying.

5.2.3 Nursing teachers' autonomy codes

The Nursing educators proclaimed a strong connection with the profession of nursing. The teachers shared a focus on being 'a nurse' as a crucial part of their identity, resulting in a double positioning of being in both the nursing and vocational education fields. This connection was underpinned by professional requirements mandating them to be actively working in the healthcare field to maintain their nursing registration. While they still saw themselves as actors within vocational education, this dual identity puts them towards the edges of the VET field, due to having a foot in each of these worlds. Utilising the translation device displayed in Table 5.1 (pg. 81.), their distinct identification as teachers reflects *stronger positional autonomy*. However, moving to the second level of the translation device, this dual identity positions them closer to the boundaries of the field embodying an *ancillary* position within the field (PA+).

This dual-identity appeared to be important in colouring what the nursing teachers valued as the goals and purposes of nursing education. The teachers displayed a specific way of seeing education that resonated with principles from the field of nursing. Primarily they focused on supporting students' development and growth in a holistic manner. This can be interpreted as a way of adapting the ethics of care from nursing practice into an educational setting. Furthermore, they were sceptical of the positive impacts of commercial motives in the sector – which are traditionally alien to both the education and nursing fields. They viewed these motives as antithetical to providing educational quality; a goal they consistently championed. These two stances, valorising holistic student support and devalorising economic motives, resonate with the egalitarian goals established as central to the field in the 1974 Kangan reforms (see Chapter 4.2.3). Using the translation device displayed in Table 5.2 (pg. 82) this aligns the nursing educators with a position of *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+). Moving to the second level of the table, these goals are purely focused on educational quality as the benchmark of the sector, reflecting a *core* purpose (RA+ +).

Bringing together the above, the nursing teachers embodied an *associated* role reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+) and valorised *core* goals of the field reflecting *stronger*

relational autonomy (RA+ +), resulting in them occupying a *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+ +). Figure 5.1 displays the relative position within the sovereign code of the nursing teachers on the autonomy plane, with their close connection to the field of nursing placing them closer towards the boundaries of the field in regards to positional autonomy. This double-positioning has been seen to be important in terms of the principles the nursing educators valorised within the field, but this leads to the question of whether it shapes the nursing teachers' perceptions of marketization reforms. I now turn to examine how these educators characterized reforms in the sector.
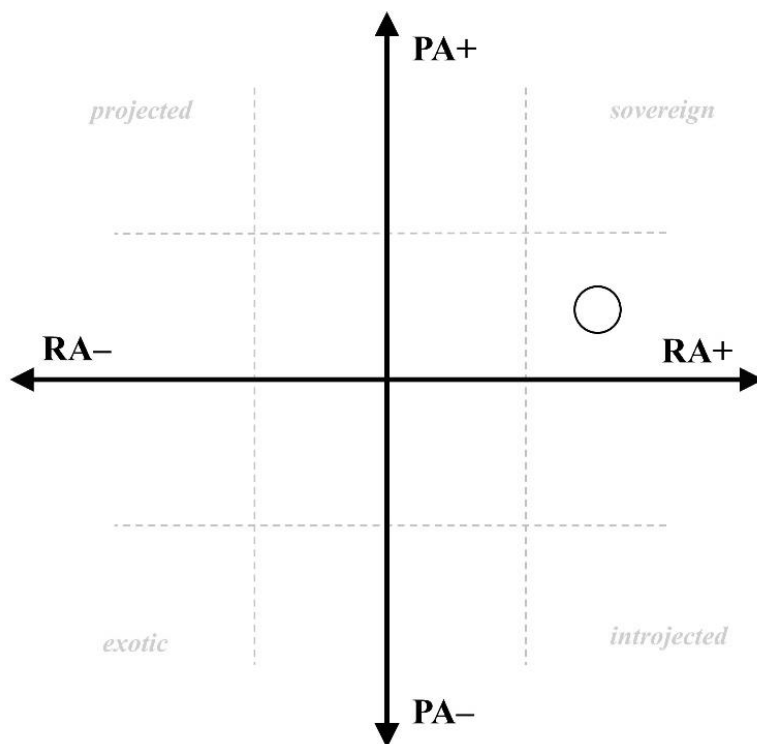
Figure 5.1. Autonomy code of the nursing teachers

5.3 NURSING TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF MARKETIZATION REFORMS

Nursing educators viewed marketization reforms as conflicting with the ways of working in vocational education. They characterized the reforms as originating from beyond the field, and even once incorporated into the field, being implemented in a top-down fashion by senior managers. They understand the reforms as embodying non-educational logics, reflecting their economic pedigree in championing competition and consumerism into the sector. The

nursing teachers' characterizations of the nature of these reforms will be examined using autonomy codes.

5.3.1 External and top-down: Origin of reforms

The teachers characterised the reforms as being instigated from outside the education field. Rebecca illustrated the origin of reforms in emphasising that the creators of the changes are distant from the results of reforms: 'if you're up in the ivory tower, yes you can bring in that change whenever you like, but some of the changes actually have a huge effect on the teachers, which also then, because I think teacher, I think student'. The use of the 'ivory tower' analogy highlights this divide, in that policies devised by those outside the field often had unseen consequences for both teachers and students. This understanding constructs policy-makers and senior managers as disconnected from the students, teachers and classrooms where the actual educating occurs, framing them as positioned outside the educational field. This results in characterizing the reforms themselves as originating from actors outside the field, with this distance from the classroom causing unforeseen and unintended consequences for teachers and students.

The teachers felt that these externally devised policies were imported into the field and executed by senior management in the sector. It was suggested that these policy changes came from above, as Angela indicated, 'we get direction from faculty'. Rebecca emphasises the perceived distance of senior managers from the realities of educating: 'I don't think from those people up at the top, there is much recognition that anybody down the bottom is actually working very hard'. This further emphasises that those in senior positions within the hierarchy of the field are disconnected from the activities and goals of the field itself, minimizing the teachers' influence on changes in the sector. The view that the teachers are devalued was reinforced by the lack of consultation throughout the reform process, as Rebecca outlines, 'I think with that one, I don't know anyone that was consulted. There might have been an email…I don't recall, of all the people that I know in TAFE, I don't recall anybody saying, "Gee, we've been asked for feedback, we were asked to put our ideas in"'. As such, even when the reforms are implemented by those inside the field, they are characterised as outside nursing education due to their distance from the actual educating involved, with minimal input from those at the 'chalkface'.

5.3.2   Unfamiliar commercial goals: Values of reforms

In addition to characterizing the reforms as coming from outside the educational field, the nursing educators understood reforms as based on values that were alien to their beliefs about VET. Indeed, they characterised the reforms as embodying principles, particularly those of competition and consumerism, that run counter to values they champion as *both* nurses and nurse educators.

The teachers highlighted the veneration of competition as a panacea for improving public services as a central principle within the reforms. The teachers objected to the implementation of competition as it shifts the incentives of the sector from providing support to students to running profitable courses, as Kylie describes: 'TAFE had never run first aid as a standalone before, because it's too expensive. TAFE out-cost themselves as far as in the market, to be competitive… A first aid course at TAFE as a standalone is $300, you can get it at a third of that price [from private providers in the sector]'. The teachers found this frustrating as TAFE is unable to offer the wide-ranging, but expensive, support services to students if their courses are going to remain economically competitive. Jennifer explains this: 'So it's just all the layers that happen with TAFE, it would become too expensive when you add 30%'. This particularly irked the nursing educators as the holistic support of students, which as both nurses and educators they valued highly, appeared incompatible with the new principles of competition. Rebecca explained how the shifting of funds from support services towards competing in the educational market reinforced the nursing teachers' frustration: 'Because this section takes, business takes a section and then public relations take a section. All these people take a chunk or need a chunk... even though they've had nothing to do with it'. Their dual identity as both nurses and educators valued this holistic support highly, while categorizing these commercial areas within TAFE as less important. Their perception of competition resulting in resources being shifted from student support to less 'educational' areas of TAFE, led to them understanding competition as a principle from beyond the field of education.

The teachers additionally characterised the shift towards increasing consumerism as a central motive of the reforms. When focusing on the divergent values of the reforms the nursing teachers pinpointed the 'the introduction of fees' as crucial, as 'TAFE used to be a fairly cheap place to go and get an education' (Jennifer). This was understood by Jennifer to have changed students' relationship with TAFE: 'we have people who are identifying not as a student, but as something else, trying to get a qualification', or as Ilhan suggested 'as the customer'. This was framed as changing the behaviour of the students in the sector, as Camille illustrates, 'They pay $20,000 to do the course, so they turn up late'. Camille further suggests that this consumerism can result in diminishing the educational opportunities for students:

> Whereas now they really need the money, so they've got jobs so they miss classes, and they're late because they're at work…Some of them work night shifts on nursing homes, or they're delivering pizzas until eleven at night and they come to class half asleep. They haven't done their assignments because they've been out delivering the pizzas or whatever. It's really hard for them. I understand all that. It doesn't make my job easier, though.

Her frustration was not with the students, as she understood they need to work, but rather with the system that had previously allowed them to study full-time, being changed by fee increases. In highlighting the variety of ways that consumerism comes into conflict with many of the educational values of the sector, Camille constructs these reforms as being based on a different, external set of principles. As both nurses and teachers, treating their patients or students respectively as customers was a foreign concept, as such their dual-identity made this shift particularly problematic for them.

5.3.3   Autonomy code of reforms

In suggesting that marketization reforms were instigated by senior management and policy makers, without the input of teachers, the nursing educators construct the reforms as coming from outside the VET field. Their conception of the 'top-down' nature of the reforms was emphasised through their perception of senior management being strongly disconnected from the actual educating involved in the field. In suggesting that teachers were not involved or consulted in the implementation of marketization reforms, and that those who did initiate the reforms were external to the field, the nursing teachers constructed the reforms as originating from outside education, reflecting *weaker positional autonomy*. Furthermore, the nursing

educators' clear conception of the reforms being initiated by agents largely disconnected with the field indicates them occupying an *unassociated* position in the field (PA– –).

In addition to feeling as if senior managers and policy makers were disconnected from the educational field, the teachers characterised the reforms as based on values from outside the field. The teachers highlighted two principles that they felt were particularly divergent from the traditional values of vocational education: competition and consumerism. These two characteristics are highlighted as antithetical to the values the teachers were inculcated with through both *nursing* and *educating*. In terms of autonomy codes, this is an example of the teachers perceiving the reforms as embodying a set of values from outside the field which they were unfamiliar with, reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA–). Their emphasis on the stark incompatibility of these market-based logics with the realities of vocational education suggests that the reforms were based on an *unassociated* purpose with the field (RA– –).

Bringing together the above, the teachers understood the reforms as originating from outside education and based on heteronomous principles. Figure 5.2 plots this coding on the autonomy plane, with the teachers perceiving the marketization reforms as embodying a position deep within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). While the teachers may characterise the reforms as a whole as representing a foreign intervention in the field, this may not be the case for the myriad of impacts of such reforms. As such, the following section will explore how the teachers perceived and responded to some of the effects of marketization reforms.
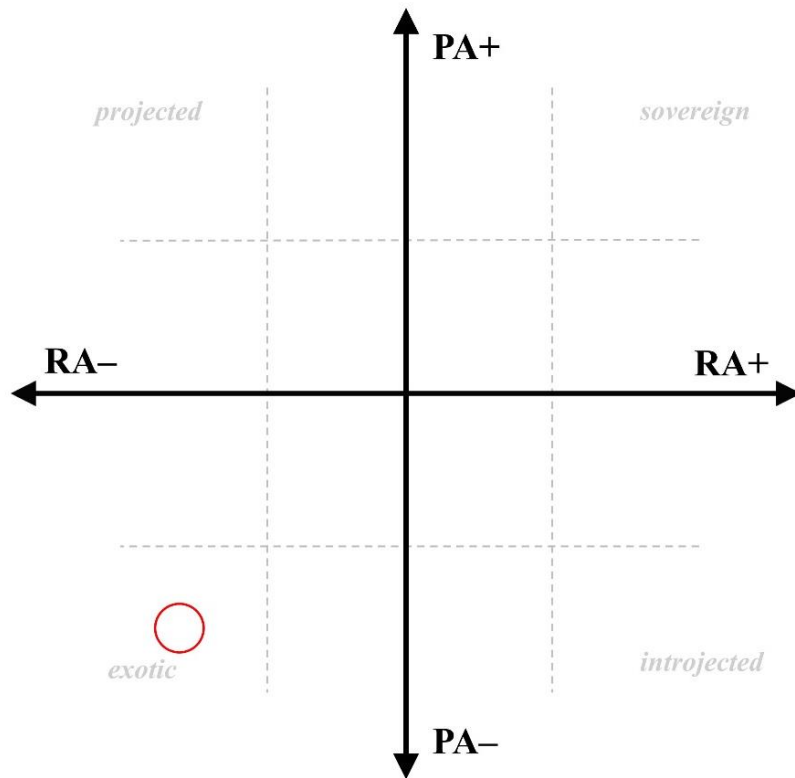
Figure 5.2. Autonomy code of the nurses' characterization of marketization reforms

5.4 EFFECTS OF REFORMS – THE VIEW FROM NURSING EDUCATION

The nursing educators have demonstrated a complex dual identity as both nurse educators and nurse practitioners, regularly drawing on their experiences from both worlds. They understood marketization reforms as alien to their understanding of their work, utilising their experiences from both nursing and vocational education to emphasis their external origin. The teachers' perspective of the effects of the reforms and the teachers' responses will now be similarly examined to explore whether they characterized these effects in a similar manner.

5.4.1 From nurse educator to educational administrator: Changes in work roles

The nursing teachers attributed many of the changes to their role in the sector to the top-down nature of reforms and the disconnect between upper levels of management and teachers within TAFE. They suggested that they had increasingly had more responsibilities and roles placed upon them by senior management, due to these managers not recognising or

understanding the existing pressures teachers were under. These new expectations were problematic for the teachers as they increasingly diminished the educational aspects of the role. The nursing teachers perceived the result of this as a shift from being a nurse educator to occupying a less 'educational' role, one with a more administrative focus.

The nursing teachers were frustrated by the additional responsibilities imposed by senior management. Rebecca describes the top-down direction of this process:

> I think some of that comes down from the top, because it's like somebody sits in their ivory tower somewhere and just goes, yeah, somebody else can do that and they pass it down and then it just gets passed down and it stops when you're on the bottom rung because there's no one to pass it to.

This demonstrates their perception of the origins of this extra work, as well as reflecting the perceived distance between senior managers in their 'ivory tower' and teachers in the dominated position of being on 'the bottom rung'. Rebecca further suggests that this is a 'disconnect from the people that are at the top having any idea what the people down the bottom do' which is problematic for senior managers who interpret and implement policy to have a limited understanding of teachers' classroom practices. The continual allocation of new responsibilities by senior management has resulted in an increasingly burdensome workload for teachers, with Angela suggesting that the workload 'certainly has increased, and it seems to be increasing still'. Rebecca quantified this as, 'there is a perception that, as a teacher, you'll work 35 hours a week. I probably work closer to 60'. The teachers highlighted that while the increase in workload itself was problematic, it was the nature of their new responsibilities that compounded their frustrations.

The teachers described a wider variety of 'non-educational' tasks that they were expected to perform, such as increased administration, marketing responsibilities and compliance activities. The nursing teachers' administrative responsibilities were highlighted as a major contribution to this increased workload. Rebecca characterised this as 'a lot of teaching now is not teaching. Yeah, it's a lot of office stuff', while Camille suggested that nursing teachers were now 'Always answering emails. That's what we do half the time now. We didn't do that before. It was just teaching, and that was the end of it'. Ilhan emphasised the diligence required from teachers in regards to this administration: 'You can adjust to it, but you have to be really well organised and stay on top of things. If you get a little bit behind in your admin

work, then you're forever catching up, because it is a lot of admin, it's a lot of paperwork'. She suggested that one reason for this increase was due to changing systems for keeping track of student enrolments, marks and payments. This was exacerbated by the concurrent reduction of support staff: 'It became far more administrative without administrative support' (Jennifer). The teachers also suggested that this administration was increasingly valued by management as the most important part of teachers' role, and failure to do the administration correctly was a constant source of management ire. Rebecca describes such communication from management:

> Everything that comes down is, "No you've got to do this" or, "You've got to do this", "You haven't got this in" or, "We've sent this email out 15 times". There is no recognition you've probably sent it out 15 times because the people that you're sending it to have got probably 300 emails to get through. Yeah, I think administration is highly valued in this organisation.

The increasing value placed upon this administration, and the corresponding increase in the amount of time it occupied for teachers, frustrated the nursing educators as it detracted time from 'educational' tasks.

The nursing teachers also highlighted the increased expectations in regards to marketing as an additional role imposed by management. Many of the teachers lacked experience or expertise in this area, yet now, 'I'm expected to know about marketing, and how we're going to market this' (Jennifer). While teachers understood the increased importance of marketing to students, they expressed discomfort with the expectation that they would play a role in attracting students to their courses. Ilhan describes the implicit ways this was enacted:

> I think there's a lot of subconscious affects, the way they've changed their emails, in the answer the email has to have the logo there at the bottom, and the logo ... Actually you will see my email has a little advertisement down the bottom or whatever. So, little things like that, that we've been asked to do formally. So, it is sort of imposed on us, but we don't realise we're actually doing marketing.

Ilhan demonstrates nursing educators' discomfort with increasingly having their position within TAFE constructed around ideas of marketing and branding rather than their traditional educational role. However, Camille had a different experience to the above teachers in not feeling the pressure to engage in marketing courses: 'I haven't had anything to do with that'.

Nevertheless, those teachers who had experienced this marketing role demonstrated a distinct discomfort with a role which Ilhan described above as being 'imposed' upon them.

The teachers also highlighted the new expectation to perform more compliance activities. One of the nurse educators emphasised the increasing regularity and diversity of different audits they were now expected to prepare for: 'but I suppose, the audits have increased. Because there's different audits. We don't just have one auditing body. Training Services New South Wales, or ASQA, or internal audits, or SSO audits' (Angela).[17] This substantial increase in audits appeared to cause less frustration amongst the nursing teachers than those in other areas (see Chapter 6.4.1), as they understood auditing as important: 'We have to stay current' (Camille). This was further explained by Kylie, in detailing that as part of their professional body nurses are automatically audited every five years in order to keep their qualification. As she outlined, 'As nurses, we're audited through NMBA.[18] There's a separate auditing as well, so we go through that process as well, as nurses, for here to teach our nursing course'. She suggested that because the teachers were familiar with the auditing process from nursing, they were more understanding of the need for continual auditing: 'we know we're always gonna be audited again. But it does help quality improvement'. As such, while the nursing educators identified these new expectations around compliance activities, they were more accepting of this, as they recognized its benefits. This provides an example of the teachers' close connection with the nursing field shaping their understanding of principles in education, in this case inculcating them with the culture of compliance.

The imposition by senior management of more administrative, marketing and compliance roles exasperated the teachers as they added more non-educational tasks to their work. The teachers generally found these tasks frustrating and unfulfilling, with the exception of the compliance-related tasks. Further, Rebecca explained they had less time for 'preparing for classes and being in class and doing the things that most of us like doing' due to these new expectations. This caused them to work greatly extended hours in order to maintain the quality of education they were providing or sacrifice some of their classroom preparation and innovation in order to complete these new tasks. This again reflects the conundrum that marketization reforms placed the teachers in, as these new aspects of their role limit their

---

[17] Skills Service Organisations – Industry organisations that determine the contents of training packages.
[18] Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia – regulatory body for nurses in Australia.

capacity to continue to provide high quality education, as Angela described, 'It has affected teaching time. Which is why I wanted to work at TAFE'.

5.4.2 'I understand business is business': Changes in work goals

The new economic principles incorporated into the sector by marketization reforms were uncongenial to both halves of the teachers' dual-identity: nursing and educating. The introduction of this new goal of profitability was unfamiliar to the teachers, as it was historically not a targeted goal in the nursing or education fields in Australia. In aiming for profitability, TAFE initiated a number of policy changes that shifted the nurses' practices in the sector. These new commercial motivations, such as the quantification of the sector, increased consumerism and substantial cost-cutting, were alien to the teachers as they were not established values within the nursing or vocational education fields. This unfamiliarity resulted in the teachers feeling as if the principles of the field were shifting underneath them, leaving them disconnected to their profession and producing a 'challenging environment' to which they 'struggled' to adapt (Angela).

One of the major examples of the shifting goals of the sector was the increasing quantification of teachers' work. Introducing performance metrics has been a common strategy in modern public sector reform across a wide variety of areas (see Chapter 2.3.1). Within VET this was enacted through a focus on student completion rates. This emphasis on completions was the result of two factors connected to the trajectory of the field. First, in attempting to adopt strategies from the private sector in order to increase efficiency TAFE itself has highlighted increasing completions as a strategy to maximise government funding. Secondly, in response to unscrupulous behaviour of private RTOs immediately after the *Smart and Skilled* changes governments increased the regulation of the sector mandating high completion rates in order to receive funding (Bolton, 2018). The nursing teachers were instructed to focus on completion rates as a measure of success: 'we've been directed to have good enrolment numbers, and try and have those good completion rates' (Angela). Teachers struggled with this quantification of success as it overstated the role of the teacher and made them feel pressured to pass students they did not think were competent. Furthermore, completions were often not in their control, as Angela illustrates: 'We don't want people to start and not complete. Though, that happens, because people find out, "I don't like body fluids. I didn't realise that was what nursing was ..." Or life gets in the way for people'. Using

completion rates as a yardstick of success often left teachers feeling disheartened for students dropping out for reasons not within their control.

The teachers raised a second objection to the increasing importance of completion percentages: that it would diminish nursing standards, having effects beyond education and into their professional field. Teachers framed this as reducing the quality of education they were providing or even harming the integrity of their profession. Ilhan's explanation of this is worth quoting in full, as it includes her intuitive understanding of who is going to be a 'good nurse' and her duty to maintaining the quality of the profession:

> We've been in nursing for so long that we know if a student is going to be a good nurse or not. It's just ... I suppose instilled in us now, I guess. If you know that the student is not going to be a good nurse, but you're told by your employer that you have to help this student one-by-one and get him through this course, it's disheartening to do that. And you always have that hidden agenda, that by the time these guys graduate and really get into nursing, you might be their patient, so you want to make sure you get good nurses out there. That's the hidden agenda.

While Ilhan framed this as a personal worry about one day being the patient of a deficient student, this was reflective of a wider pride in the quality of the profession and her role in maintaining its legitimacy. Ilhan highlights the conflict between managers pressuring teachers to 'get [students] through the course' with teachers' educational motivation to maintain the quality of their profession. In objecting to the validity of completion percentage as a metric, and highlighting its educational costs, the nursing educators demonstrated their clear discomfort with increasing quantification in VET. The focus on quantification was particularly antithetical to their perspective of vocational education shaped by nursing, in that they understood providing holistic support and care to students as something largely unquantifiable.

The teachers suggested that a second way TAFE shifted its practice in order to pursue profitability was the reconceptualization of the student as a consumer. Teachers expressed concern about the changing relationship between teachers and students, as they understood themselves as supporting the students' educational journey, rather than simply selling them a qualification. As previously mentioned, teachers compared TAFE with private providers, to demonstrate the differences between them, but also to highlight a convergence in their

practices. They suggested that other training providers, due to being as Rebecca described 'all about the money', let students enrol in nursing who would be unable to attain the qualification due to their poor English language skills. Rebecca demonstrated her bemusement when interacting with a private provider: 'How can you accept them with levels of English this low? There is a quantum leap to get them to a level that they can register'. Jennifer highlighted the connected issue of private providers reducing teaching hours for qualifications, as it is 'impossible to keep that educational quality high when you're doing it in so fewer hours'. Other teachers suggested that it was dishonest to the students in setting them up to fail, whilst also placing an unfair burden on the teachers in trying to raise English language levels. As Ilhan discussed when comparing her time working for a private provider:

> The private RTO had no criteria. It was just a matter of you want to do it and you're able to come to class. They were told how the classes ran and everything. If they want to do it, they could do it… the students, they were the commodity, they're the ones that are going to pay for the employees and everything … they were a bit lenient with who they were allowing to enrol and then expecting us as educators to spoon feed them.

Ilhan explains the logic behind more lenient student admissions and taps into the increasingly dominant discourse in vocational education of students being framed as 'consumers' or 'commodities'. She further emphasised that she understood the logic of the RTO, 'they're paying students - the international students. So definitely ... I understand business is business. So the RTO needed ... would encourage international students'. This focus on students as commodities was evidence of the changing values within the sector, and the nursing educators distanced themselves from these values, with Rebecca describing it as a 'very, very dodgy practice'.

The nursing educators emphasised that this consumerist turn in vocational education resulted in educational trade-offs. As a recent employee of a private nursing college, Ilhan emphasised these costs for both students and teachers, 'They're the commodity, they're making money from them. But then we have to pay for it as educators, because we have to get them to that level that they're expecting'. She contrasted this approach with the entry criteria at TAFE, 'Here, it's very structured criteria. It has three or four levels to it before they actually accept the student. So, you're getting a student who is already literacy level is sort of up there'. She suggested that this meant that she could teach at a more consistent level as there was less

'mixed' ability among the students. While Ilhan was valorising the educational principles which she felt TAFE exemplified in this example, she also expressed concern that TAFE was moving to mimic some of the strategies from private providers: 'I never had the perception that the student would be like a commodity in TAFE, but sometimes I feel as though, they are looked at that way'. Through these examples, the teachers frame educational quality and commercial goals as in opposition, with private providers characterised as more commercially-oriented than TAFE. However, they described their perception that TAFE was increasingly adopting practices that converged with those of private providers. The teachers' discomfort at this can be understood as stemming from their position within both the nursing and VET fields where there are strong discourses valorising prioritizing students and patients' interests over commercial profits.

The teachers described a third effect of TAFE striving for profitability: an increased focus on cost-cutting, particularly of auxiliary programs. Support services, for both students and teachers, such as library staff, counselling, general education providing literacy and numeracy support, and educational guidance staff, were foundational services offered by TAFE as part of its initial goal of promoting social mobility. Jennifer highlights concerns with these cutbacks, particularly for 'second chance' students: disadvantaged students who struggled with mainstream education:

> You had those second education people coming back, second chance education people. They came back and they needed support. There was only so much you could do in the classroom, but the support, the library facilities were brilliant, and they're cutting back all those areas.

The nursing educators particularly highlighted that these cutbacks also applied to support services for teachers, as Camille described when putting resources online for her students:

> They say use Moodle [their online education portal], but my Moodle's not set up properly. I just found out this morning…we're all saying, "We don't know how to do Moodle". We need someone to help and there's no one to help us. If you want us to use it, we have to know how to do it.

Camille explains the pressure the teachers felt to change and adapt, whilst also emphasising their frustration in not being provided with the support to do so. In attempting to explain the lack of support, the teachers suggested that marketization reforms were ironically responsible for both the push to innovate, and the removal of the support services that would have enabled this. Angela provides an example of this, 'Before the reforms started, we had over in

Building A, I don't know what they called themselves, but they were the Moodle go-to people. And they were very helpful at the beginning, and then reforms started and then that disappeared'. These surrounding support services played an important role of the holistic educational goals that were initially central to TAFE's values, thus their contraction represents a substantial shift in priorities that was strongly felt by the teachers. This was reinforced by the nursing educators' particular dual-identity within the sector as their incorporation of the ethic of care within education resulted in them highly valuing these support services.

Faced with the orientation of the VET field towards the goal of profitability the teachers became increasingly disconnected with this new direction. The teachers complained of how the changes had shifted the behaviour of managers in making them entirely budget-focused, as Jennifer describes, 'it was very different, we had assistant directors looking at the budget, looking at how much you spend, keeping that the focus'. Furthermore, this resulted in perceived changes in the behaviour of students, increasingly conceptualising TAFE in a more utilitarian way, focusing on 'the qualification, not the education' (Jennifer). This fundamental shift in the values of the other actors in the field left the nursing teachers feeling disoriented and deprofessionalised. This feeling was reinforced by the increasing prevalence of casualisation in the sector being a regular theme among the nursing educators: 'there's not that many full time [positions]' (Rebecca), while Camille describes her frustration as a casual teacher seeking full-time work for an extended period, 'they haven't had a permanent probably since 2009. They haven't had any contracts or anything'. The increasingly casual workforce made it more difficult for the teachers to build a professional community of VET practitioners and define their values in the sector, lowering the personal investment in the job and diminishing their agency in the field.

5.4.3   The effects of reforms - autonomy codes

The teachers perceived the reforms in TAFE as being a top-down imposition from senior management that changed how they understood their role in vocational education. Management directives shifted teachers' time towards less 'educational' tasks, primarily more administration, business and marketing responsibilities, and compliance related activities. All the nursing teachers highlighted the increase in administration in their role, which in LCT terms can be coded as an *ancillary* role reflecting *stronger positional*

autonomy (PA+). However, the teachers often described this as taking time away from educational preparation and teaching time, which is coded as reflecting a *core* target role reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+ +). Even though course administration was understood as part of their role as a teacher, they were frustrated with this change. LCT can illuminate this, as they understood their role becoming less educational, in terms of autonomy codes a drift from a *core* role (PA+ +) to an *ancillary* role (PA+). Second, some teachers felt that the new expectations in regards to marketing and branding constructed their role as increasingly disconnected from education, which can be coded as them perceiving their position being framed as an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Finally, the increased time on compliance related tasks are illustrative of an *associated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA–). However, the teachers found this shift less problematic; they accepted the legitimacy of auditing due to their experience of it in nursing. Figure 5.3 displays how these three issues combine to shift the nursing educators' perception of their role to an *unassociated* position, reflective of *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). However, apart from frustration with the increased administration load, the nursing educators appeared to willingly adapt to, or be minimally affected by, this shift in role. One potential explanation of this could be due to the nursing educators originally understood themselves as at the border of the field based on their strong professional identity. As such, the relative shift to their perceived identity in the field prompted by the reforms was less than other teachers in the study (see Chapter 6.2.1), thus they had less issues adapting to these changes.

Furthermore, the teachers perceived the reforms as shifting the goalposts from focusing on educational quality to targeting profitability. They witnessed the shifting purpose of the field in a number of ways, primarily the quantification of the sector, the reconceptualization of the student as a consumer and the cost-cutting of support services. The quantification of the sector through the targeting of completion rates was understood by the teachers to be directing them to pursuing funding goals rather than educational quality itself: an *associated* purpose reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA–). Likewise, the shift towards understanding the students as consumers indicates a purely commercial perspective of VET embodying an *unassociated* purpose representing *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). The cost-cutting of support services provided further evidence of this shift, which the nursing educators found particularly problematic as from their holistic understanding of VET these student support services were essential. In each instance these changing values represented a shift in relational autonomy, from the teachers' strong belief in the educational purpose of the

field (RA + +) to their conception of how reforms have altered the goals of the field to be oriented towards commercial principles (RA– –). The fact that these changing values diverged so substantially with those held by the nursing teachers can help to explain why they found these changes more confronting, as opposed to the changes in roles outlined in 5.4.1.

Bringing together the above, the nursing teachers understood marketization reforms as having a substantial impact on the sector. These changes ranged from larger scale cultural changes within TAFE, to practical inconveniences of new student management software. As demonstrated above, the teachers described management as increasingly constructing their role as 'non-educational'. However, the bulk of the changes that the teachers were most opposed to, and had the biggest impact on their enthusiasm for teaching in TAFE were, related to the changing values of the institution, as it adopted a more 'business-based' model. As portrayed by the arrow in Figure 5.3, the teachers understood these two pulls on their identity as shifting them from a position in the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+ +) to the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). The substantial shift required of the teachers in terms of autonomy codes can help to explain why the nursing teachers described having difficulty adapting to the new context of the reforms.
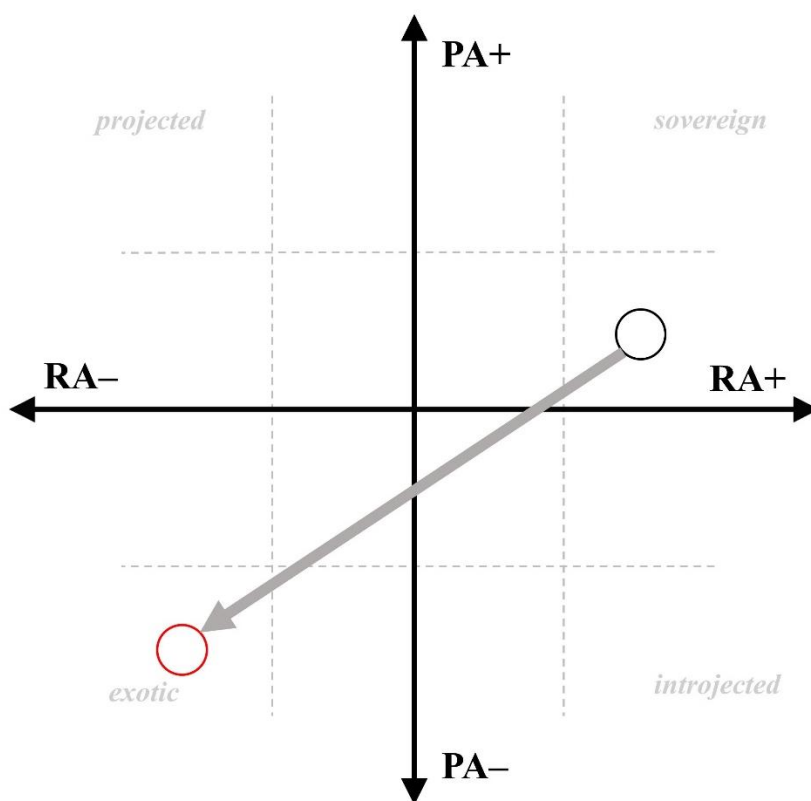
Figure 5.3. Nursing teachers' conceptions of the effects of reforms on their role in vocational education.

5.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to examine how teachers in nursing experienced marketization reforms. First, the nursing educators' perspective on their position within the wider field of VET was established, including how they understood their identity as teachers and the purpose of nursing education. Second, the nursing educators' characterization of the origins and principles of marketization reforms were investigated. Third, the nursing educators' understanding of the impacts of reforms and their responses to changes were explored. Each section coded the responses in terms of their strengths of positional autonomy and relational autonomy. This allowed exploration of how the teachers perceived the principles of the field, and their identity within it, had been altered due to reforms.

Nursing teachers strongly identified as both nurses and educators, occupying positions in both fields. In having a foot in both worlds, the teachers understood themselves as located at the borders of the vocational education field, embodying an *associated* role in the field reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+). This dual identity appeared to be important in colouring their understanding of the goals of vocational education, with their perspectives from nursing refracting their beliefs about the purpose of VET. This was particularly visible in how they brought understandings of the ethic of care into their educational work, focusing them on principles such as holistic student care and scepticism towards economic motives. This aligned them with many of the traditional educational principles embedded in the sector, a *core* purpose of the field that reflects *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +). As such, while they saw themselves at the border of the educational and nursing fields, they embraced a number of the autonomous principles of the field which aligned with their beliefs from nursing, resulting in them embodying a position within the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+ +). The importance of this dual identity to the nursing teachers' perspective of vocational education will be further examined in the following chapters to explore if it is a common theme among the teachers.

The nursing educators viewed the reforms as originating from outside the VET field and being based on foreign principles. They understood the reforms as being initiated by those

external to the field and implemented within it in a top-down fashion, characterizing the reforms as originating from an *unassociated* position of the field that reflects *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Additionally, their dual-identity as both nurses and teachers was important in shaping their attitudes towards reforms. They focused on principles underpinning the reforms that were foreign to them, both as nurses and as teachers, such as the introduction of competition and consumerism into the sector, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose for the field: *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). In pinpointing the reforms as originating with policymakers outside the field and being based upon economic values that they were unfamiliar with, the teachers' characterization of the changes could be coded as perceiving them as occupying the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –).

The nursing educators understood the effects of the reforms as pressuring them to perform less educational tasks and altering the principles of the field to be oriented to goals heteronomous with the sector. They described the impact of these reforms as pressuring them to adopt an identity that was less educational, due to the increased emphasis placed on the non-educational aspects of their role, embodying an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Furthermore, the nursing educators perceived that marketization reforms had resulted in the principles of the sector shifting, as a more commercially focused understanding of vocational education was embraced, embodying an *unassociated* purpose reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). The combination of these resulted in the nursing educators perceiving the reforms as pressuring them to adopt a position within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –): performing a non-educational role, oriented towards non-educational goals.

The nursing educators struggled to adapt to these new principles in the sector, resulting in them feeling overworked and undervalued. They had particular issues adapting to the changing principles of the field, as they had distinct understandings of the goals of the sector structured by their dual identity as nurse-educators. This suggests that the nursing educators' conception of their position in the field may be important in explaining how they respond to reforms in the sector. The next chapter will investigate this question further by examining teachers from a different area of TAFE, with a distinct history, values and workforce: trades educators.

CHAPTER 6 - TRADES EDUCATION: 'RUSTED ON' PUBLIC SERVANTS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The analysis in Chapter 5 explored how the nursing teachers understood, interpreted and responded to marketization reforms within vocational education. It showed that the nursing educators maintained a close connection to the field of nursing and the values they brought from it appeared to be important in colouring their interactions and responses to reforms. This leads to the question of whether other groups of teachers similarly drew on their occupational field when attempting to adapt to marketization reforms. Chapter 6 will attempt to do this by examining how a different teaching area in TAFE responded to reforms: trades teaching. This teaching area represents a different position in the field; as opposed to the humanist goals of nursing, the trades are more commercially-oriented. Based off the experience of the nursing educators, one might expect that the more commercial orientation of the trades would allow its teachers to embrace the commercial-oriented changes to the sector. However, this chapter will demonstrate that this logic is more complex than first indicated. Trades teaching has been part of the VET field in Australia since its inception, in comparison the nursing entering the field during the 1980s. The trades teachers involved in this study reflect this wide range of experience having worked within TAFE between 3 and 32 years, in a diverse range of trades including carpentry, signage, electro-engineering, blacksmithing and construction. As is typical of trades teachers, those in the study largely moved into teaching from working within private industry, before beginning to complete an educational qualification. As a result of this, the majority of trades teachers did not have a university degree, in contrast to the nursing educators who were all tertiary educated. As such, the trades provide an insight into another position within the VET field as the trades teachers' different attributes and long history within the field positions them differently to the nursing teacher previously examined.

In order to investigate the impacts of marketization reforms within the trades this chapter will firstly position the trades within the wider field of vocational education, establishing the specific values and principles that ground their position within the field. In determining their position within the field and the principles they operate under, the differences between the teaching groups can be identified and examined. Second, it will investigate how teachers in

this section construct their understanding of the reforms, both in terms of where they characterised the reforms originated from and what principles they attributed as underpinning them. Third, the chapter will examine the teachers' descriptions of the effects of the reforms in their area, and the pressures these changes placed upon them.

6.2 TRADES TEACHERS' POSITION IN THE FIELD OF VET

In sharp contrast to the nurse educators, the trades teachers portrayed themselves as long-term occupants of the vocational education field, with much less focus on their connection with industry. In not regularly connecting with industry they were increasingly siloed within the VET field. To provide context for the teachers' long term occupancy of the field the history of trades education in Australia will first be briefly outlined to explain its transition into the VET sector. Following this the interview data will be utilised to explore how the trades teachers positioned themselves within the field, before looking at the principles regarding vocational education that the trades teachers valorised. Finally, both these aspects will be brought together utilising coding from LCT to demonstrate the trades teachers' perception of their position within the VET field.

The unique history of the trades within the wider field of vocational education shapes the understandings of those teachers within it. Trades education was central to the formalisation of vocational education in Australia, resulting in the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts being established in 1833, with a widening range of technical courses offered through to the turn of the century (Willis, 2011). While the Sydney Technical College was established in 1891, it was not until 1914 that trades courses offering additional instruction to formal apprenticeships were established in a number of trades schools in NSW (Knight, 2012). This model of mandating students to complete an apprenticeship in the workplace while undergoing trades training was implemented into TAFE when it was established during the 1970s, with apprentices at TAFE one day every week. The apprenticeship model of education provides a foundation for teaching in the trade and has a substantial history of being used in Australia (Harris & Simons, 2005). This model involves students' education taking place within an actual, physical context of practice (Pratt, 1998) and working side by side with an expert to learn a specific task (K. E. Hay & Barab, 2001). This training is normally supplemented with in-classroom education, which in this instance is provided by the TAFE teachers (Brandt, Farmer, & Buckmaster, 1993). This in-classroom, subject-specific instruction enables the professional work experience to be reflected upon, systematised and

transformed into generalizable theoretical knowledge (Rauner & Smith, 2010). This concept provides a key element of the knowledge base in the area: demonstrating the theoretical principles behind their work.

The long history of the trades within VET means that it was central to the initial creation of TAFE in the 1970s. Its presence during this period is important; the policies that initiated TAFE's creation were embedded with principles of social justice and a conception that TAFE could offer a 'second chance' at education for disadvantaged students, resulting in trades education being imbued with some of these values. This is an important point of contrast with both the other teaching areas examined in this project, as they entered the sector after this period. The trades teachers within the study reflected this long tenure in the sector, with some specifically discussing the Kangan reforms that were implemented in 1974 that lead to the creation of TAFE. Another point of contrast is that the trade sector as a whole is still highly gendered, with women making up roughly 2% of the trades workforce (Department of Family & Community Services, 2013), and 12% of apprentices in Australia (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2019). Compared to other teaching areas trades students are generally younger, with 55% of students being under 19 and 78% of apprentices being under 25 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2019). This younger student body may make some of the teachers' role more similar to high school teaching with a focus on discipline, class control and mentoring.

6.2.1   Experienced educators: Trades teachers' view of their position

The trades teachers understood themselves as long-serving educators. They characterised trades teachers as generally having substantial experience within the VET field and were often disconnected from other fields such as relevant industries, although this disconnect was evaluated differently by the various teachers. Jameis, a younger casual teacher in the sector, characterized the trades teachers' lengthy experience as being of great value: 'these guys [the teachers] are like 35-40 years, just been doing the same thing. They've seen the technology. They adapt. They're experienced…their knowledge, it's gold'. In focusing so specifically on their exclusive origin within the educational field, Jameis highlights teaching experience as being essential to high quality educating within the trades. Russell, a metalworking teacher with 18 years teaching experience, similarly valorised the trades teachers' long-term occupancy of the VET field in discussing past teachers who had retired: 'I would've been

more of a pest than I really was to try and extract stuff out of them, because as people leave industry, they take a lot of this knowledge. It's the gold. The knowledge is the thing'. Both these accounts focus on the substantial experience of trades teachers and how this experience provides them with rare and valuable insights.

Other teachers in the study also highlighted the trades teachers' substantial experience, but characterised it as a weakness, rather than a strength. Colin highlights their long-term teaching experience and consistent tenure as public servants within TAFE: 'you're dealing with teachers, they're good teachers but they've been public servants for over 20 years… It's really difficult to… change the culture to something that has to be business-oriented'. This emphasises the teachers' long employment by TAFE, occupying a position within the heart of the field of vocational education. Furthermore, it posits that this position has structured their values, and that the teachers have been stalwarts of reinforcing those values within TAFE more widely. In contrast with Jameis and Russell, Colin frames this long-term occupancy of the field as a negative due to it limiting their ability to adapt to changes. Peyton, a carpentry teacher of 22 years, similarly emphasising the dangers of remaining siloed within the educational field as 'rusted on public servants' in the following narrative of one of his teaching mentors:

> I know he'd been there for a lot of years, in the sense that, he was around when I first started, as one of the head teachers. And he was also, in that sense, one of my best mentors, in the early days, in a number of ways… He said, "Oh, you know, give me anything but nail guns. I've never used one." And that's where I thought, "Shit, you really need to stay current with industry," because I was using those as an apprentice, back in the late '70s, early '80s. He'd been at TAFE for a long time, but at that point in time, like ten years ago, he'd never used a nail gun. That's really bad I think.

Peyton clarified that he thought this teacher was a 'terrific teacher' in many ways, but that for him this reinforced the dangers of only teaching within TAFE and not connecting with industry to stay abreast of best practice. While the teachers had varying conceptions of the value of being long-term occupants of the field, they described it as a frequent characteristic of trades teachers.

6.2.2 'I'll teach you the way I'm gonna teach you': Trades teachers' understanding of the goals of VET

This long-term occupancy of the field appeared to give the teachers confidence and steadfastness in their educational understandings and beliefs. Many of these beliefs echoed the traditional principles of the field of which they had been long-term occupants. This revealed itself through the championing of educational principles within TAFE, denigration of private providers' profit motives and focus on pastoral care for the students.

The trades teachers, more than the other teachers involved in the study, celebrated and aligned themselves with the traditional values of TAFE. They were consistent in celebrating TAFE as a public vocational education provider, with Jameis suggesting that 'TAFE is actually brilliant. The structure is brilliant', while Andrew emphasised its importance in stating 'TAFE, it's the best learning process available for tradesman. Anyone who says different, they're full of shit'. This praise for TAFE often focused on the values of TAFE in the past and the excellent training that it had formerly offered, implying that this had diminished. Peyton's rich explanation of this change is quoted in full:

> When I first came into TAFE, we were very strong on celebrating that we were
> amongst the best trainers in the world. I know from students and young blokes
> that I had as apprentices in the industry, that would travel overseas and if, you
> know, when they say they're tradesmen from Australia, they work anywhere in
> the world, because our training was that good. Our tradesmen were that good.
> That's eroded. …when you've got a system that's so good, don't fuck with it… I
> don't think that's the case any more, and that's a shame.

Within this, Mark's primary yardstick for judging a good educational system is the quality of tradespeople it produces. This perspective is founded upon looking inward towards the internal values of the field in focusing on educational quality, rather than external values of economic efficiency or human capital. This was reflected by the other teachers, who when asked to describe TAFE's strengths consistently returned to educational themes, for example Jameis highlighted, 'our structure, our books, our content, everything's in place', while Andrew focused on 'Yes, we've got lots of buildings and lots of expense, lots of overhead, lots of materials. Okay? Bad luck. If you want to produce quality people out there for business in Australia you need TAFE'. While Andrew explicitly highlights that TAFE may be less efficient if judging the sector from an economic perspective, both he and Jameis champion the value of TAFE from an educational standpoint. The above perspectives on the

value of TAFE all share a focus on educational quality as the yardstick of the sector, rather than economic measures of success.

The trades teachers' valorisation of TAFE appeared to be reflective of them broadly conceiving of the sector in solely educational terms. When framing the goals of the sector, they focused on educational knowledge and holistic skills they could pass on to the students, as Russell describes:

> You want to make people a better tradesman than you think you are. That should be the goal of a teacher. If I think I've sent that person out now with more skills than I had and a pathway to go and learn more.

This strictly educational focus incorporates some social justice principles of expanding educational access in also providing students a 'pathway to go and learn more'. The teachers substantial history within the sector offers one explanation as to why they display a distinctly 'educational' perspective of the goals of VET. Russell also demonstrated the trades teachers' broad definition of educational success, focusing on holistically supporting students as they develop and grow into adulthood:

> These three years we have them, they do take some big steps up into adulthood and you see them change. Even the most disruptive person, because they can see now, for instance, why the theory that you're using here is going to be important to them when they're actually done making something. You just see this click. All of a sudden, hang on, that's why I need to do this math…The most disruptive person could end up being your best student by third year. And then you're sorry to see them go, because they're an absolute pleasure in the class. They're almost a role model for other people.

This narrative was corroborated by other teachers who talked about helping the students 'grow up' (Andrew) and 'become adults' (Peyton). This focus on personal development could be due to the younger age of trades students, many of whom enter as school-aged apprentices.

In complement with the above, the teachers also distanced themselves from the more economic values that were becoming prevalent in the sector, due to the recent entrance of private providers into the field. Much like the nursing educators in Chapter 5.2.2, the trades teachers contrasted the values of TAFE with those of private providers, in order to distance themselves from these values. Andrew highlights the problems of diminishing educational

quality in the sector, 'we get unqualified tradesmen coming through and the building game falls on its head…The ones we're training out at TAFE have got half a chance. The ones from tick and flickers and online sources, you're not gonna learn crap'.[19] In highlighting the importance of vocational education and valorising the role of TAFE within it, Andrew emphasises why it is so important for TAFE to uphold its educational values. However, Andrew's description of TAFE students having 'half a chance' refers to TAFE increasingly adopting cost-cutting measures from the private sector, suggesting that while TAFE's practices were distinct, they were converging with those of the private providers. Other teachers echoed this concern about TAFE increasingly adopting these economically-focused practices, as Aaron' illustrates: 'Whereas originally, TAFE was, the teachers ran it and mostly, with majority say on things, and it was educational ... So yeah, the model has changed. And the philosophy seems to be that private things work better'. Aaron explicitly aligns teachers with educational values and opposed to the philosophy that 'private things work better' a reflection of neoliberal economic thought that comes from outside the educational field. As such, the teachers are constructed as embodying educational values, working in opposition to neoliberal economic ideas that are being incorporated into the sector, which are devalorised as heteronomous goals.

A distinct aspect of this educational focus was consistently returning to the impact changes would have on students. The teachers focused on the students as their raison d'etre: 'We're in this game because we wanna teach. There's a natural desire to want to give the kids the best you can' (Drew). They were invested in providing high quality education to the students, and when asked to focus less on educational quality ('not giving a shit' in the following excerpt) they bristled at the suggestion, as displayed by Andrew:

> I've got a class of kids that when I turn out, I expect them to be a certain quality.
> Why? 'Cause my name's on them…I don't want to have to say, "Well, I don't
> give a shit." It's not about not giving a shit… I didn't spend 40 years of my life
> learning something to come in and go read out of a book like that and say, "Do
> that exercise. Yes, you're a carpenter." Guess what? You're not a freaking
> carpenter. You're not a carpenter's ass. Okay? I'll teach you the way I'm gonna
> teach you.

---

[19] 'Tick and flickers' is a derogatory term for private educational providers who do not provide substantial training, but rather 'tick' students as competent in order for them to finish their qualification as quickly as possible.

In investing so much of their professional esteem in the quality of their students the teachers display their primary focus being on educational outputs. Based on this position, catering to other priorities, such as efficiency or student flexibility, conflicts with their core, educational values.

6.2.3 Trades teachers' autonomy codes

The trades teachers characterized trades education as being located within the interior of the VET field. Unlike the nursing educators' construction of working between two 'social universes', the trades teachers understood themselves to be long-serving members within the educational field, often disconnected both from the trades industry and other fields. Some of the teachers highlighted this as a key strength of the teachers as it provided them with deep disciplinary knowledge and pedagogic skills, while others framed this characteristic as a weakness due to the disconnect with contemporary industry practice. However, underlying both evaluations was the premise that many of trades teachers were highly experienced educators, with limited connection to other fields. In terms of autonomy codes, this reflects *stronger positional autonomy* as they are experienced agents of the field of vocational education. Further, in emphasising their disconnection from other fields they construct themselves as having a solely educational position, embodying a *core* position within the field (PA+ +).

While their associated industry trades mostly ran according to the logics of the private sector and business, these values did not appear to influence the teachers' understandings of education as they did for the nursing teachers. This may be due to the aforementioned disconnect from private industry, as the teachers' long-term occupancy within the educational field inculcating them with many of the values vocational education was founded on in NSW. The trades teachers consistently focused on providing high quality education as their central purpose. Furthermore, they characterized themselves as bastions of these educational values within the sector, upholding them against the attempted importation of heteronomous principles, primarily economic understandings of education. Their values were displayed in their student-centric conception of their work, as they sought to maximise the educational benefits for the students as their primary goal. Extending this understanding to also considering the holistic development of the students during their time at TAFE is further reflective of one of the traditional values of the sector in providing holistic education, rather

than simply training for vocational purposes. These values collectively manifest a *core* purpose that reflects *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +) as the teachers consistently valorised educational quality as the *only* legitimate yardstick in the sector.

Bringing together the above, the trades teachers understood themselves as embodying a *core* role reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+ +) and valorised *core* goals of the field reflecting *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +), resulting in them occupying a *sovereign code* (PA+ +, RA+ +). Figure 6.1 displays the relative position within the sovereign code of the trades teachers on the autonomy plane, with their slightly stronger relational autonomy than positional autonomy due to some teachers' emphasis of the need to connect more with industry. In establishing the trades educators' perception of themselves within the wider VET field, this leads to the question of whether this position deep within the core of the sovereign code was important for shaping their understandings of, and responses to, marketization reforms. I now turn to examine how the trades educators characterized reforms in the sector.
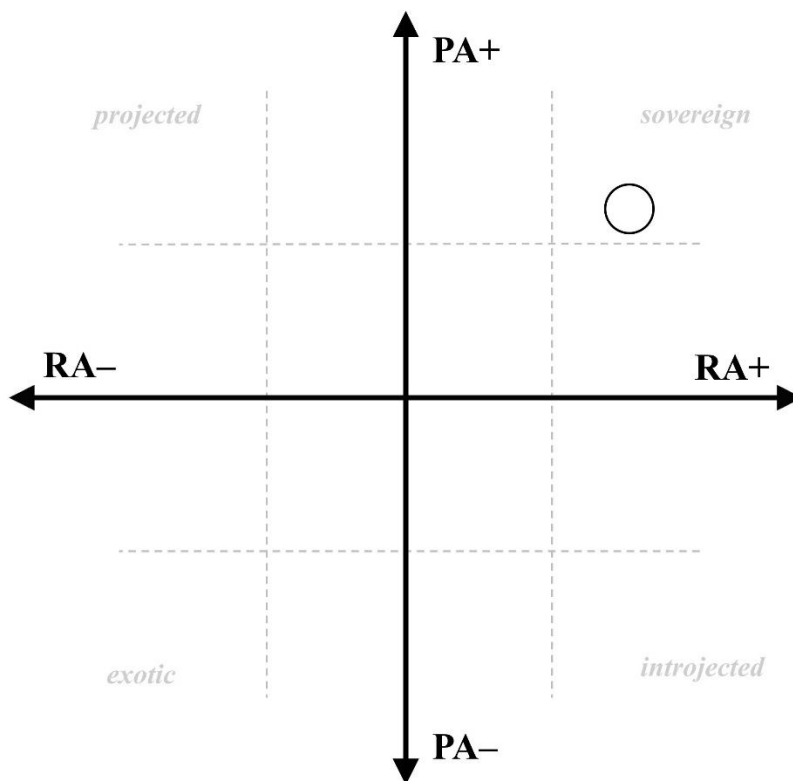
Figure 6.1. Autonomy code of the trades teachers

6.3 TRADES TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF MARKETIZATION REFORMS

The trades teachers drew on their long history within the VET sector when characterising marketization reforms. This perspective provided them insight, as they identified that reforms were not initiated by teachers or other agents within education. The teachers characterized the reforms as stemming from government policy, being implemented in a top-down approach and without proper teacher consultation. Furthermore, the teachers perceived the reforms as being based upon values and principles foreign to the sector. They specifically highlighted the reforms giving primacy to business goals in the sector and introducing practices from the economic field that were incompatible with some of the fundamental goals of VET.

6.3.1 From outside and lacking consultation: Origin of reforms

The reforms were characterized by the teachers as being instigated by the government. They highlighted that the government now set the expectations for the sector, as Colin describes: 'the government goes, well, this is what we're going to do here'. Other teachers explicitly acknowledge that TAFE itself was pressured by governments to adopt these reforms: 'TAFE has probably, gosh shouldn't say TAFE, because it's driven by the government but, TAFE has been devalued by putting, or having to put these measures in place, because we're not delivering the same standard of training' (Peyton). By clarifying that these changes were not instigated by TAFE, Peyton emphasises an important point among the teacher quotes, in that while they will regularly be frustrated with senior management as the implementers of change, they are able to identify that these changes were designed and mandated by those outside education. Peyton explicitly highlights this in stating: 'We'll have directions come down from management above us, and we'll scream back at them, and push back on that at different times about different things. But they're only acting on orders as well'. In identifying the reforms originating from agents within the political and economic field, the teachers construct the reforms as originating outside the field of vocational education.

While perceiving the reforms as originating outside the sector, they understood them as implemented within the sector in a top-down fashion by senior managers. The teachers consistently focused on the distance between those designing and implementing policy, and teachers in the classroom: 'They haven't thought about what it means down here where we're

actually delivering it. So it's a lot of work for us' (Colin). Teachers treated this top-down, uni-directional policy implementation with scepticism, constructing senior managers as too distant from education to understand policies' impacts, as Andrew argued, 'They [senior management] said, "Oh, we don't have to do this now." I said, "Listen, no offence, you're not qualified to say that. We're on the coal face, we know what's going on. You're not". Andrew further highlighted that not only were senior managers no longer 'at the coalface' but that they were increasingly actors from outside the field, in describing the new head of TAFE NSW, 'John Black. He's from the army… We've got someone in at the top, he don't know the system. He's just a figures man'. John Black's background from outside the field is characterised as limiting his educational knowledge, and his ability to understand and run TAFE. This disconnect between teachers and senior managers resulted in an often adversarial relationship between these groups, as Aaron elaborates:

> Every time we try to improve the education process they're trying to destroy
> them. I felt like there's a real adversarial situation here, taking our power away.
> They've got all the power and they're ... The enemy. They're not assisting,
> they're destroying. They, as in the people in management. And as soon as most
> people move to management they become the same.

The vehemence in Aaron describing senior management as 'destroying' educational processes highlights the divide perceived by the teachers, between themselves and managers. Aaron additionally draws on his experience in the sector to validate this divide, as he has seen colleagues move into management and across this divide. This can help to explain the teachers' understanding of the reforms as a top-down process, as this divide resulted in them feeling disconnected from policy design and implementation.

This was reinforced by the teachers feeling as if they were not consulted during the reform process. Peyton commented on the lack of substantive teacher input to reforms in suggesting, 'I don't know too many teachers that are happy with the changes. I don't know how much currency teacher feedback gets'. In this Peyton is implying that while teachers may have been consulted about the reforms, their input into the final changes was minimal. Aaron further illustrates this in suggesting that teachers' input would have made the reforms more successful, 'when they started saying, "Well it's costing too much." Well, okay. And if they had tossed that to us as teachers we could think of how would we could do some cuts while still maintaining the educational side'. Within this Aaron suggests that in addition to the problem of TAFE 'costing too much' coming from outside the educational field, the adopted

solutions to this problem also came from outside of the field as teachers were not involved in the design. Implied within this, is that due to the reforms being designed by those outside the field they ignored the educational costs of the changes, of which the teachers were acutely cognisant.

6.3.2   Prioritizing the economic: Values of the reforms

The teachers characterized the reforms as giving primacy to the 'economic' over the 'educational'. One of the trades teachers, Jameis, exemplifies this in stating, 'the accountants are in control. They're not listening so much to the teachers on the ground'. Jameis highlights that the power is now with accountants and administrators within TAFE and that they are determining the priorities rather than educators. The use of the term 'on the ground' to describe the position of the teachers within the field, re-emphasises that from the teachers' perspective their role is the central task of TAFE and that other parts of TAFE are less central to the field. The trades teachers highlighted the new focus on cutting the contact hours of courses as evidence of these shifting values: Jamelle describes how they were directed to restructure courses based around 'what the minimum hours is that we could deliver in… we've gone down from 864 to 720'. Andrew expressed his frustration with this shift in values, by highlighting how it conflicted with providing quality education:

> It's always pressure from the top. Everyone puts pressure on everyone down the line. And guess who gets their head kicked in at the end? The ones who do the most work and are producing. We're the ones that get our asses kicked. So what do we get out of it? We get an hour cut off our day, so we go from an eight hour day to a seven hour day. Okay, yes, we saved all this money. That's fantastic. Who does it hurt? The students.

Andrew constructs a dichotomy between the goal of 'saving money' and the goal of educating 'the students'. In doing so, he establishes commercial conceptions of the field as foreign to, and actively in competition with, the traditional autonomous goals of vocational education.

In addition to external values, the reforms imported external practices that could clash with educational priorities. The trades teachers used markets as an example of this. The teachers understood these markets as problematic as they were entirely oriented towards goals from beyond the sector, such as economic efficiency and cost-cutting, which ignore many of the

traditional goals of the sector. Peyton's explanation demonstrates how these logics ignore the provision of holistic student support that the trades teachers believed are central to TAFE:

> The government has decided to introduce private training organisations, contestable funding, we all have to go out there and compete for business. We, probably, don't have a level playing field… the private organisations don't have to provide counselling, libraries, disability services, all those things that as a government organisation we do, so we've got to provide all those extras, and somehow still compete with all these smaller organisations that don't. So it's not a level playing field.

Peyton's explanation about the potential problems of introducing market logics to education acts to highlight the foreign nature of these practices. Andrew further elaborates on the problems of competition in the sector, as the focus of the sector becomes reducing costs rather than increasing educational quality: 'we're up here and the RTOs and the plebs below us are down there. Why are we trying to come down that way? We're up here, they should be coming up. They should be coming up to us, not us going down to them'. The teachers clearly construct markets as promoting behaviour that is not oriented towards the traditional, educational values of the sector. The teachers' long-term occupancy and inculcation with the values of the field are a possible explanation as to why they found this shift in principles both jarring and problematic.

6.3.3   Autonomy code of reforms

The teachers understood the reforms as introduced from outside the sector, largely through government policy. These reforms were then implemented by senior managers in TAFE that the teachers characterized as distant from the actual in-class educating, and thus lacked understanding of and knowledge about the field. When combined with the trades teachers' complaints that they had not been consulted about the reforms, they constructed the reforms originating solely from outside the field of vocational education. From this perspective, the trades teachers' conception of the reforms can be coded as embodying *weaker positional autonomy* (PA− −). Furthermore, the teachers' consistent reiteration of the distance of senior managers and policy makers from the actual in-classroom educating suggests that they understood them as occupying an *unassociated* position in the field (PA− −).

Correspondingly, the teachers understood the changes as being based upon values that were foreign to the VET field. The teachers highlighted the reforms giving primacy to the goals of business and introducing practices from the private sector, such as market-mechanisms, to the field. These practices were demonstrated to conflict with the traditional core ideals of the sector that the trades teachers valorised, resulting in the teachers feeling these principles were alien to the traditional ways of working within the field. In perceiving these goals as being unrelated to, and coming into conflict with, the traditional goals of the sector the teachers characterized the reforms as embodying values of the economic sphere, distant from educational values; in LCT terms, an *unassociated* purpose that reflects *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –).

Bringing together the above, the trades teachers understood the reforms as being designed and implemented by those from outside the field (PA– –) and based on a different set of values than had traditionally been prevalent within the VET field (RA– –). Figure 6.2 displays the coding of the teachers' conception of the reforms as embodying a position deep within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). The trades teachers' long experience within the field appeared to be important for how they understood the origin of these reforms, allowing them to confidently categorize them as foreign to the sector. This leads to the question of how this group of trades teachers, occupying the core of the sovereign code, perceived and negotiated the impacts of reforms they saw as coming from outside the sector.
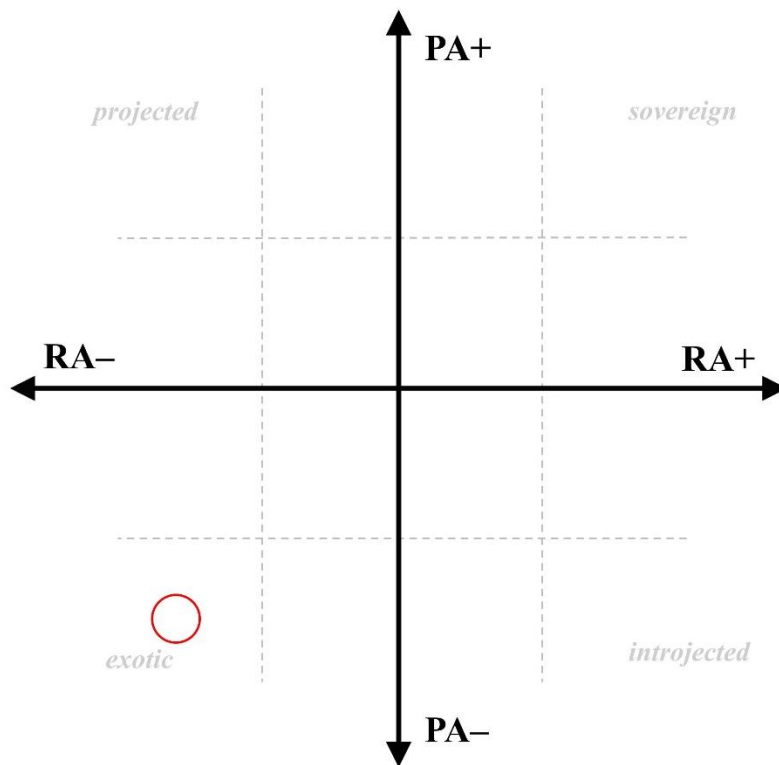
Figure 6.2. Autonomy code of the trades teachers' characterization of marketization reforms

6.4 EFFECTS OF REFORMS – THE VIEW FROM TRADES EDUCATION

This chapter has demonstrated that the trades teachers characterised themselves as long term occupants of the VET field, who were largely inculcated with many of the traditional values of the VET field. They understood the reforms as originating from outside the vocational education sector and based upon values from outside the field. This section aims to bring these two together to examine how the trades teachers understood, negotiated and responded to the effects of these external changes. To do this, the section will initially focus on how reforms have altered the tasks and roles the teachers described as part of their work, before focusing on the teachers' perception of how the reforms were altering the principles and goals of trades education.

6.4.1 'I'm not a freaking admin man': Changes in work roles

The increasing diversification of their role was a central impact of the reforms, according to the trades teachers. The tasks involved were strongly varied and often distanced from actual

educating, as Colin described, teaching now involved in-classroom educating 'plus the finance, plus marketing, plus student administration, plus compliance, plus validation, plus commercial work. So it's become, yeah, a lot more away from the educational side'. They highlighted that the three biggest additions to their role were increased administrative responsibilities, compliance related activities and expectations in regard to policing students' finances. Within each of these the teachers consistently expressed concern that these roles decreased time spent on educating; they found the additional workload problematic, but the diminishing educational aspects were antithetical. The result of this was the teachers feeling increasingly undermined and deprofessionalized.

The trades teachers highlighted that one of the biggest changes since the reforms was the increased importance of administration within the organisation. Colin described, 'teachers are doing more of the admin role' as 'sucking time out', while Jamelle estimated that 'with the introduction of Smart and Skilled… the workload has probably tripled' in terms of administration. The teachers emphasised that the impact of the increased administrative expectations was exacerbated by them receiving less teaching support, as Colin outlines: 'When you think of, you know, we've lost class support in terms of store people, maintenance people, technical assistants and things like that. So those roles are falling back on teachers as well now'. The prevalence of frustration among the teachers at this increased time on administration can be somewhat explained by their lack of expertise in these new roles. Russell explained his annoyance in that, 'I've been here at 10:00 at night trying to finish off results. Look, I'm a dinosaur. I'm not the fastest on a computer'. The significant emotional cost of this increased workload was further emphasised by Russell:

> We're checking one another's stuff because we're not admin people. We're not data processors. That's a thing that's really got under a lot of teachers' skin. We have teachers just, and I'll say it, go off on stress. Just stressed out to the point of having breakdowns over this. Because you want your students, your customers, to get the results they need.

In highlighting the shift in role as highly problematic, as the teachers are not 'admin people', Russell suggests that this is a substantial change to their traditional teaching roles within TAFE.

A second major way the teachers described their role expanding was through increased expectations to police student finances. Teachers reported having more access to student data

due to changing enrolment systems and administration requirements, resulting in teachers now being responsible for ensuring that students have paid their fees. In combination with the large fee increases that were part of the 2015 *Smart and Skilled* reforms, this new role for teachers is more burdensome than in the past and lead to substantial teacher discomfort. Russell's explanation of this is included in full, as it illustrates teachers' trepidation at this expansion of their role:

> I can see a student's fees. Do I, as a teacher, need to see whether the student is financial or not? You start to open an area where that's knowing too much about my student… My prime role should be the student, the class, and working through that study area they're doing or the subjects they're doing. And now I'm starting to worry about if this guy's not financial, so I can't do this, that, and the other with him. I can't add this to him. I'm hunting the student. That's another face a teacher has to take.

This new 'face' teachers had to take of policing student fees was another impact of marketizing the sector, due to the shifting culture towards economic managerialism. This provided a sharp contrast with many long-serving trades teachers' past experiences of the sector, where apprenticeships were previously free.

The final facet of their work that increased due to reforms was the renewed focus on compliance and auditing. Trades teachers discussed the substantial time that was taken up with these activities, and particularly that this had increased from the past, as Colin explains, 'I supposed the biggest side, especially for the teachers, is basically with compliance. So in terms of what we do in terms of compliance and validating everything we do, that has probably increased 10-fold'. This increase in compliance expectations was not pinpointed to specific reforms or years, but had been gradually introduced as TAFE adapted to a changing regulatory environment:

> Gradually over the last seven or eight years, when everyone's sort of gone oh, okay, we're giving you this responsibility or opportunity, but now you've gotta do this and you've gotta do this, and this compliance box and this compliance box have gotta be ticked. And so it's become a really arduous task. (Tom)

In addition to emphasising the increased focus on compliance within TAFE, the trades teachers were deeply sceptical of the motivations behind it. They characterized the increased compliance as 'Basically, ticking boxes to prove that you're doing your job properly, justifying your existence' (Drew). This description, of compliance being more about

demonstrative acts of educational performance, than improving educational quality, was substantially different from the nursing teachers' understanding of auditing as an important facet of maintaining educational quality. The teachers further drew on their extended history within the field to validate this scepticism. Peyton provides an example of this: 'There's so much more governance, and compliance, and validation now that needs to be done, or reporting… None of that was around when I was an apprentice. We don't have better tradespeople today because of it'. Peyton argues that, from his distinctly educational viewpoint, increased compliance has not improved the quality of tradespeople and therefore has minimal educational value.

The expansion of teachers' role in these three substantively different areas are connected by how they were framed by the teachers. Teachers' frustration at this expansion was not framed through disinclination towards the increased workload, but rather through a sense that they were increasingly being deviated from their central purpose: educating. Colin provides an example of this in highlighting how increased compliance reduces time for educational tasks: 'their lesson preparation time is basically reduced because they have to also meet all the other requirements now in terms of compliance and stuff like that'. The trades teachers articulated a clear conception between what they understood as educational and non-educational roles, as Andrew emphasises in his discussion of administration:

> Incidentals hours should be for class prep and for the students. Not for admin. I'm
> not a freaking admin man. I'm a freaking teacher. So I've gotta do all this
> freaking admin stuff and expected to do it. Wasn't part of it before.[20]

In contrasting the two roles, Andrew clearly valorises the educational aspects of his work, and emphasises his identity as a teacher. The teachers described that these educational components of their job were also the ones that gave them the most enjoyment, as Russell illustrates:

> When you finally get a Word document completed that you can use in class, or a
> handout that you can give people… bang, that's the part we should be doing.
> That's the part that really give you a bit of oh, gee, I really feel like I've done
> something. You can do as much admin as you want, but you don't get that
> satisfaction. I find we don't get enough time to do that.

---

[20] Incidental hours are hours teachers are paid for outside the classroom.

In seeing their teaching work as more meaningful, the diminishment of this part of the role meant the teachers felt less connected with the work. This was exacerbated by these new roles making the teachers feel as if the quality of education they were providing was deteriorating. Jamelle illustrates the teachers' worry about diminishing educational quality: 'I don't think the quality of my teaching, I know I'm a good teacher, but the quality of my teaching is not where it should be because my mind's on other stuff… I think the students don't get the benefit out of me'. This kind of realisation was hard for the teachers to accept, as it led to them feeling as if their profession was being undermined, which they found deeply disappointing. Through framing this role change as deteriorating their educational abilities, the trades teachers further reinforced their belief in educational quality as the primary yardstick in the field.

The shift from 'educational' to 'non-educational' roles increasingly left the teachers feeling as if they did not have a place within the field they had long inhabited and that they were being increasingly deprofessionalised. Russell explains these feelings in describing a new compliance responsibility that requires students to sign off that they have been given feedback for assessments: 'They get the feedback. We did that anyway, but now it has to be formally signed…You feel like that's cutting into what you should be doing. That's this paper trail. Do we really need that? We're professionals. We're giving feedback anyway'. This quote neatly explains teachers' frustration with compliance and performance management strategies in that they are based upon the expectation that teachers are not competent or motivated to do their jobs to a high level, whereas the teachers feel as if providing high quality education is central to their identity as 'professionals'. Aaron explains how this results in a feeling of distrust:

> It became very prescriptive or very described. So you really had to follow what was in the syllabus…These changes have been brought by management, what they appear to be doing or saying is that, "We don't trust you as teachers to be doing the right thing. So we're going to check every little thing you do"… But the whole thing is that we seemed to be really mistrusted.

In addition to feeling distrusted, the resultant lack of teaching autonomy due to increasingly prescriptive managerial directions further diminished teachers' morale as, 'the teachers were motivated more, because they had more autonomy, because they're doing their own thing. There's a natural desire' (Drew). This left the teachers feeling deprofessionalized in having

their teaching abilities scrutinized, spending more time on non-educational compliance related activities and increasingly having less autonomy in regard to their classroom practice.

Ultimately, this resulted in a sharp decrease in morale in the section, as Aaron describes, 'We felt like weren't being treated as professionals anymore ... And the morale in the section just plummeted as a result of that, it was really hard to maintain that'. The teachers suggested that these changes fundamentally shifted what teaching trades at TAFE entailed, as Peyton explains: very significantly because the job's not what it was when they came in, and they're being asked to do so much more, and give so much back'. The result in this substantial change in the job-roles expected of them was widespread disengagement from the role and a substantial amount of retirements among trades teachers. Colin explains the logic of the teachers: 'a lot of the older people that maybe would have taught for a little bit longer have basically just gone, "You know, I just don't have the energy to do this anymore"'. The trades teachers' distinct dissatisfaction with these non-educational roles could be explained by their long experience within the VET field, and general disconnect from other fields. They had developed a distinct understanding of the solely 'educational' tasks encapsulated in a professional teaching identity.

6.4.2 From student-focused to industry-focused: Changes in work goals

The new goals of the sector that were most visible to the teachers were the conception of TAFE as a business, the focus on cost-cutting and the emphasis placed on industry connection. The teachers categorized these goals as external to the sector. They framed them as actively contradicting educational principles, often resulting in educational costs. They were both unable and unwilling to embrace these new values, due to these high educational costs. Ultimately, this left them feeling increasingly alienated within their own field.

The teachers identified that TAFE now framed itself as a business, rather than an educational provider, although the teachers problematized this in different ways. Peyton explained his experience of this shift: 'It's definitely business. That's what I'm doing, I'm running a business, because we're working on a straight up revenue model. It's like I'm the business manager and I've gotta pay the wages and the income is the Smart and Skilled subsidies from the students'. Reframing the students as income based on their subsidies further reflects that a commercial focus is now the underpinning principle of vocational education. The teachers

also highlighted this shift through the changing language of the sector, as this vignette from Russell demonstrates:

> You see they've got this horrible term, over-servicing. How can you over-service a student? If you can give them more, isn't that better? But again, you've got a timeframe and the costs and subsidies being paid. It's got to be finished at that time. We all hate the word over-servicing.

Russell's frustration with 'over-servicing' is emblematic of the shift of values; it embodies concepts of profitability and cost-efficiency from the private sector that were foreign to the teachers and goes against the core educational principle of offering the highest quality of education possible. Not all trades teachers found the shifting priorities as confronting as Russell represents, such as Peyton who describes the change as: 'A lot of the courses that we develop, in a way which is sort of questionable as far as ethics go... We develop as a quick money spinner, they subsidise the other important courses'. Peyton is more able to adapt to these changes, finding them ethically questionable, rather than 'hating' them like Russell, which Peyton attributes to his background dealing with the economic realities of running a small business.

The trades teachers identified a culture of cost-cutting as a second major values shift within TAFE in response to marketization reforms. Teachers suggested that this culture of cost-cutting had become ubiquitous across TAFE, as Peyton highlights, 'it's getting harder and harder to do that when you got less funds, and less resources, less teachers, less hours to deliver that product, because you can only stretch it so far'. The teachers identified this cost-cutting as a strictly commercial goal, rather than being oriented towards improving educational quality: 'when you don't do maintenance, you can save a lot of money, but after a time, everything is going to deteriorate' (Drew). Teachers found this 'cutting and trimming' (Drew) frustrating, as it impeded their ability to do their jobs with Andrew describing how, 'I don't want to build things out of sticks. Give us the material, give us the funding, give us the tools, let's train these kids'. Throughout this, the teachers clearly construct cost-cutting as a goal foreign to the field, never mentioning any potential educational benefits arising from it.

Not only was cost-cutting itself an example of the shifting culture within TAFE, but the teachers argued that the unequal implementation of cost-cutting further emphasised the sectors' shifting values. The trades teachers contended that educational areas within TAFE felt the burden of cost-cutting pressures much more than non-educational areas. Andrew

illustrates this in terms of teachers being directed to drastically cut costs while non-educational areas of TAFE were not similarly constrained: 'they come in and they had a competition for the logo of TAFE. Guess what the logo of TAFE is? It's exactly the same as the old logo. Right? That was a million dollar thing'. Teachers were frustrated by the cost-cutting across TAFE in general, but found these examples particularly galling as they symbolized the value TAFE placed on areas prioritized by reforms, such as marketing, compared to actual educating. Andrew further suggested that those who have implemented these types of changes come from outside of education and are not held to the same standards as teachers: 'Who's responsible for that? If I did something like that with my teaching class, I'd get the sack. The people who did that, they probably were all holidaying in Morocco or something. I don't know where they freaking are'. Preferencing funding to areas of TAFE that the teachers understood as non-educational, acted to further emphasise to the trades teachers that reforms were implementing values from outside the field, directed towards non-educational priorities.

The third and final shift highlighted by the teachers was the renewed emphasis on catering to the needs of industry. Colin described this as 'a lot more industry liaison involved', both in terms of connecting students with industry partners and in catering their training to what these partners wanted from students. While other teaching areas (see the hospitality teachers in Chapter 7.4.1) framed increased connection with industry as beneficial to students, the trades teachers were somewhat sceptical of this new focus: 'at the moment, we're at the peak of really focusing in on industry and what industry want, and kinda forgetting about the actual students' (Tom). In presenting a dichotomy between meeting the needs of the students and the needs of industry, Tom suggests these groups have mutually incompatible needs. Tom further explains how these goals come into conflict, 'The effect on the students is if the employer picks all these subjects, then the students quite often will just drop out, because they're not doing what they enrolled to do and it's not what they want to do'. From this vantage, prompts to increasingly meet the needs of industry are understood as orienting away from providing the best educational experience to the students.

While these shifting goals focus on substantively different changes in organisation the teachers framed all three shifts through the lens of the educational costs of these new priorities. The teachers characterised business goals and educational goals as mutually incompatible: '[if TAFE's] concern is about getting people through it and stuff, and making

the most money, you don't value all that educational knowledge' (Jameis). Peyton reframed this as a simple trade-off between educational quality and financial constraint, 'So I don't think there's any doubt that we are lessening the qualification, lessening the quality of the qualification, so that we can meet the financial constraints that have been put upon us by government'. This was additionally framed as undermining their professional responsibilities to their trade, as Russel argued, 'You think if the trade's being bastardised over something, that's not the right thing'. The trades teachers highlighted this shift as problematic, due to the primacy that these new business-oriented goals appeared to be given within TAFE. Aaron uses hyperbole in referencing a British sitcom to illustrate the dangers of adopting the values of business so wholeheartedly:

> Well if you run TAFE as a business, students make a loss for you. So your best thing is get rid of them. And then you get rid of the teachers, then you start making a profit. It's all very 'Yes, minister'. If you remember the episode when they're in the hospital and there's no patients in the hospital. Because it's running really efficiently. It costs money to educate people.

In constructing the values of business as mutually incompatible with the traditional educational values of TAFE, the trades teachers acted to emphasise the foreign nature of these principles, and the potential problems of incorporating them into the sector.

Furthermore, the teachers highlighted how some of TAFE's new goals had unforeseen educational impacts that were not adequately considered within TAFE. The focus on auditing and compliance was used as an example of this, as this was thought to distort teachers' pedagogical practice. Tom provides an example of this:

> Audit-ability and stuff. People end up designing learning tools and assessment tools that are focused completely on how they'll perform in an audit, and they forget that they're actually there to teach students…they'll have a student handout with 35 steps in it so they tick every box, and I say "Well these guys are gonna read 7."

These unintended sacrifices in educational quality were also identified in regards to the cost-cutting of support staff in terms of machine maintenance within the trades. Drew identifies how the reduction in maintenance results in the diminishing of educational quality over time, 'At some point, people go, "Oh. I can't do that anymore.", and they stop, but that's only been one activity, one exercise, one class. In another two months, there'll be another exercise that we can't do anymore because the gear's broken'. In consistently framing these new goals

within TAFE in terms of their educational costs, the trades teachers re-emphasise their 'educational' understanding of the purpose of the field, and construct these new goals as both alien to, and incompatible with, this traditional perspective of the sector.

This shift towards a set of values that the trades teachers understood as foreign to the sector left them increasingly feeling alienated by their work and disenfranchised within TAFE. The trades teachers were bemused by the new direction of reforms, and expressed their frustration with them regularly, as Andrew exemplifies, '[we should not be focusing on] how are we gonna cut costs? It's not a cost cutting service. It's an educational service!'. More than just frustration, some of the trades teachers discussed their efforts to mitigate the impact of, or actively resist reforms: 'The demands were coming down really heavily. We were considered recalcitrant, we were resisting what we thought was bullshit' (Aaron). In both describing the changes as 'bullshit' and being framed under the new logics of TAFE as 'recalcitrant' teachers, Aaron highlights the stark contrast between the teachers' values and those of the reforms. The frustration evident in Aaron' description emphasises the difficulty teachers had in embracing these changes, due to the gulf between these values systems. With less value placed on their educational efforts the teachers described becoming dissatisfied and lacking motivation at work, which Colin argued diminished teachers' will to altruistically help students:

> So the first thing that goes is basically the goodwill where people would go out of
> their way to help you, would do that extra bit or, you know, do an extra 10 hours
> a week just because they wanted to do it because it was for the students and it was
> the outcome. But, yeah, when the recognition's not there for it or the
> understanding that it's done, then the first thing that you lose is goodwill.

Colin elaborated that the decreasing goodwill in the sector made TAFE a less pleasant place to work at, with less camaraderie between staff. The new goals left the teachers without a common purpose, leaving them feeling out of place in the sector many of them had worked in for over two decades. Colin encapsulates how these changes effected the TAFE working environment with a metaphor, 'It's like it's just a cloud. Basically every day is a cloudy day rather than every day used to be a sunny day, I suppose. It's just that atmosphere around here'.

6.4.3 The effects of reforms – autonomy codes

The trades teachers described a deluge of additional responsibilities placed upon them due to the policy changes. They highlighted three primary new expectations that had been incorporated in their role: increased administrative responsibilities, compliance related activities and expectations in regard to policing students' finances. However, the teachers were largely not concerned by the increased workload, rather they framed their concerns through these roles diminishing their central purpose: educating. The trades teachers' long history within the field of VET gave them clear conceptions around what was, and what was not, educational. They understood these new roles as being primarily 'non-educational' and consistently highlighted that these new expectations both increased their workload and diminished the amount of time they had to dedicate to 'educational' tasks. This resulted in the teachers feeling increasingly constructed by senior management as occupying a role outside the field of education, embodying a position of *weaker positional autonomy*. In consistently emphasising how divergent some of these new expectations (compliance and policing student finances) were from their educational role, the teachers construct these new roles as distant from the educational field, reflecting an *unassociated* location (PA– –). The teachers' discomfort and frustration with these new roles can be understood by the substantial shift in positional autonomy that was required of them. The heuristic 'distance' they have to travel in Figure 6.3 resulted in the reforms being perceived as a fundamental attack on their identity.

Furthermore, the teachers described how marketization reforms shifted the guiding principles and goals of their work in TAFE in a variety of ways. Primarily, they focused on how TAFE increasingly adopted a 'business-like' mindset from the private sector in attempting to 'manage' the performance of staff and run in a cost-effective manner. The teachers understood this shift as widespread in TAFE and evident through a number of practices: management's evaluation of teachers and attempts to cut costs, the renewed focus on meeting the needs of industry and the adoption of the language of business into the sector. These effects all shared an underlying set of values adopted from the private sector that the trades teachers understood as diverging from the traditional goals of vocational education, reflecting *weaker relational autonomy*. The teachers understood these new values as diverging from the traditional goals of VET to varying degrees, ranging from being still somewhat connected with TAFE's organisational goals (increasing industry connection) to those oriented entirely towards external goals (focus on cost-cutting and business practices). In terms of autonomy

codes, these goals can be coded as *associated* (RA–) and *unassociated* purposes (RA– –) respectively. The substantial range of changing goals in TAFE resulted in the teachers perceiving a shift in the field to largely external values, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose (RA– –) displayed in Figure 6.3. While the trades teachers' opinions and level of concern differed across these issues, they consistently shared their worries about these changes harming the educational quality provided by TAFE, reflecting their position within the *sovereign code*. Due to many of the teachers' substantial experience in the field, they had been inculcated with the traditional values of vocational education and struggled to embrace these imported ideologies, perceiving the reforms as in conflict with their understandings of VET's purpose.

Bringing together the above, the trades teachers describe the reforms as having substantial effects on their work in the VET sector. The teachers perceived marketization reforms as increasingly pressuring them to perform a wider variety of non-educational task, which they felt undermined their educational position within the field. Additionally, they described the reforms as re-orienting the goals of the field towards heteronomous principles, often associating them with the political and economic field. As portrayed by the arrow in Figure 6.3, the teachers understood these two pulls on their identity as shifting them from a position in the *sovereign code* (PA+ +, RA+ +) to the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). This code clash can help to explain the teachers' dissatisfaction with this new role, the decreased morale in the sector and their increased feelings of alienation and deprofessionalisation within TAFE. The arrow acts to heuristically describe the long distance the trades teachers were expected to travel to articulate these beliefs systems together.
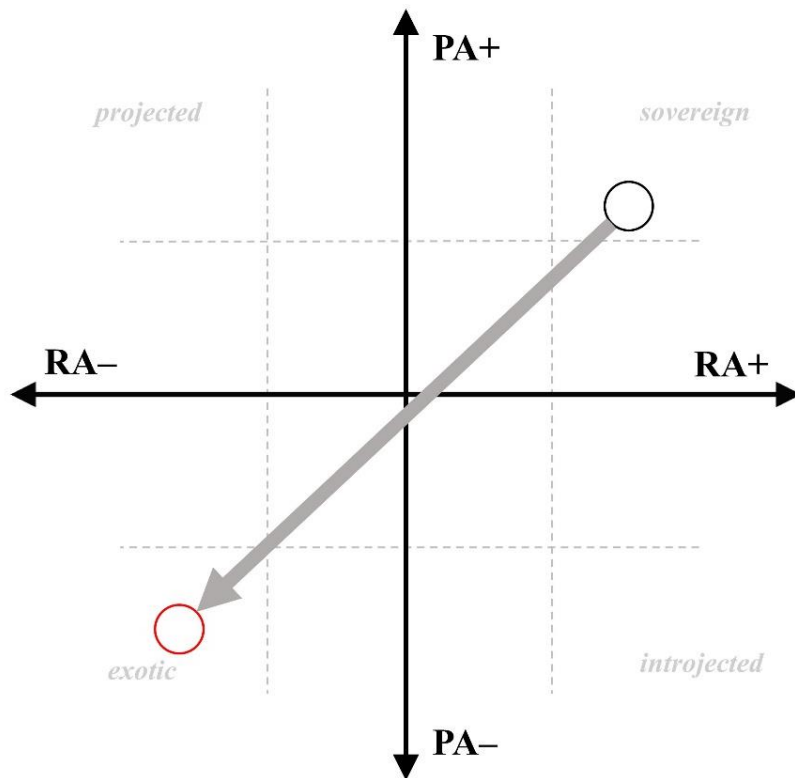
Figure 6.3. Trades teachers' conceptions of the effects of reforms on their role in vocational education.

6.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to explore how teachers in the trades perceived and negotiated marketization reforms. First, the trades educators' perception of their position within the field of vocational education was established, including how they understood their identity as teachers and the purpose of trades education. Second, the trades educators' characterization of the origins and values of marketization reforms were considered. Third, the trades educators' description of the effects of reforms and their responses to changes were explored. Each section coded the responses in terms of their strengths of positional autonomy and relational autonomy. This allowed exploration of how the teachers' perception of the principles of the field, and their identity within it, had been altered due to reforms.

In contrast to the nursing educators, the trades educators provided the perspective of long-time occupants of the field. This resulted in the trades teachers constructing themselves as having a strongly educational identity due to this experience in the field and their disconnect from the trades industry. In characterising themselves as long-term occupants at the centre of the field the trades teachers embodied a *core* role in the field reflecting *stronger positional*

autonomy (PA+ +). The siloed nature of the trades within the field meant that, unlike the nurses, they did not as evidently incorporate attitudes from their connected industry field into their understanding of education. This disconnection from other fields, meant that the trades teachers largely espoused an understanding of VET consistent with the traditional values of the sector: focusing on educational quality and holistic student support as the primary goals. Their rejection of other conceptions of the sector and solely student focus embody a *core* purpose reflecting *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +). As such, in seeing themselves as long-standing members of the field who embraced a number of the autonomous principles of the field, the trades teachers can be coded as embodying a position deep within the *sovereign code* (PA+ +, RA+ +).

The trades teachers understood the marketization reforms as being externally initiated the sector and based upon non-educational goals. They described the reforms as originating from outside the field, and being implemented in a top-down fashion by senior managers within the VET field, characterizing the reforms as originating from an *unassociated* position of the field that reflects *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). They characterized the reforms as embodying values from the political field, premised upon an economic rationalist understanding of vocational education. They drew on their long tenure within the sector to characterise these values as opposed to traditional goals of vocational education, embodying an *unassociated* purpose reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). In viewing the reforms as being designed by external actors, and based on values foreign to the field, the teachers' characterization of the changes could be coded as embodying the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –).

Finally, the chapter explored the teachers' description of the effects of the reforms on the sector and how they responded to the policy changes. They felt the reforms pressured teachers in the sector to embrace a less-educational identity, by requiring teachers to perform more non-educational tasks, embodying an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). In addition, they described the goals of the field as changing, embracing an 'economic' understanding of the sector which often clashed with the traditional educational principles of the sector, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose of *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). The combination of these resulted in the trades educators perceiving the reforms as pressuring them to adopt a position within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –): performing a non-educational role, oriented towards non-educational goals. This code clash

between the trades teachers' coding orientation (sovereign code) and how they perceived the reforms (exotic code) resulted in them feeling increasingly out of place in the field. The teachers described a wide range of difficulties they were facing as they attempted to adapt to the changes, ranging from increasing dissatisfaction with their work and feeling deprofessionalized, to substantial stress and anger with the TAFE system. This code clash can also help to explain how the trades teachers felt they struggled to adapt to the reforms, often outright refusing to enact them or finding themselves ineffective at their new roles of marketing courses or assessing the profitability of offerings.

Chapter 5 demonstrated how the Nursing educators' close connection with the field of nursing was important to how they understood and adapted to marketization reforms. The trades teachers largely lacked this dual-identity, however their initial location within the field still appeared to be important for colouring their understanding of the reforms. For the trades teachers, their long history and insulation within the field appeared to shape their understandings of the purpose of vocational education, incorporating many of the principles TAFE was established upon in the Kangan reforms (see Chapter 4.2.1). This seems to suggest that teachers' position within the field of vocational education is important for shaping how they understand and engage with marketization reform. To examine this further, Chapter 7 will investigate a group positioned in a substantially different location in the field. Hospitality shares the commercial orientation of the trades, but is also a more recent entrant to the field like nursing; thereby, reflecting a third position within the field.

CHAPTER 7 – HOSPITALITY EDUCATION: 'SALESPEOPLE' IN EDUCATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 established the context of the wider field of vocational education, demonstrating the diversity of the field as well as its complex history in Australia. To explore how different areas of this variegated field respond to universally applied marketization reforms, Chapters 5 and 6 examined the responses of different sections to recent policy changes. The nursing teachers in Chapter 5 represented a teaching area with a long educational legacy but a relatively recent entrant into the VET sector, training for a vocation that is oriented towards humanist, rather than economic, principles. The trades teachers in Chapter 6 exemplified an area of TAFE that has substantial history within the sector, but its associated industry is comparatively more commercially-focused. This chapter will examine a final group of teachers who occupy a third position within the field of vocational education. Hospitality shares a more commercial orientation with the trades, unlike nursing's focus on public good, which may be important for how the teachers adapt and respond to reforms. However, unlike trades education, it is a comparative newcomer to vocational education, with a limited history of vocational qualifications only dating to the late 1980s. Throughout this chapter the responses of the hospitality teachers will be contrasted with those from the other teaching areas, as the hospitality teachers regularly compared themselves to other areas within TAFE in order to define their values and beliefs.

The case study draws on interviews with all the permanent teaching members of a large inner-city TAFE department. While a number of TAFEs across Sydney offer hospitality courses, the department involved in the case study is portrayed as offering a premium qualification, connecting with prestigious hotels and restaurants in Sydney's CBD in order to compete with a wide range of private providers. The inclusion of all the members of the department in the interviews, provides insight into the culture of a whole department as it attempts to negotiate with and respond to marketization. However, there were only four full-time staff members within this department, resulting in less interviews being included in this case study than either of the previous two. To enable comparative analysis this chapter uses the same structure as Chapters 5 and 6.

7.2   THE HOSPITALITY TEACHERS' POSITION IN THE FIELD OF VET

The hospitality teachers moved between the fields of hospitality and education, incorporating these positions together to inform their understanding of both fields. They maintained a strong identity as being part of the hospitality industry, regularly communicating and working in the sector. This connection framed their understanding of both teachers' role in VET and the purpose of hospitality education as a whole. The location of hospitality education within the wider field of VET will first be investigated through analysing its integration into, and history within, vocational education. How the hospitality teachers locate themselves in relation to the field will then be explored, followed by what they valorise as important within VET. Autonomy codes are then used to conceptualise their position in the wider vocational education field, allowing comparison with the other teachers in the study.

First, hospitality education is a relatively recent entrant into vocational education. As a teaching area within TAFE the hospitality section is a combination of two primary branches of qualification: cookery and hotel management. Each of these qualifications were introduced into TAFE in the late 1980s (Baume, 1999; Craig-Smith, Davidson, & French, 1994). This later entry to the field is important as it was not a part of TAFE during the 1970s when the major policies shaping the sector were underpinned by egalitarian principles and social justice motives. Rather, it emerged during the late 1980s after policy turned away from these educational goals towards meeting the needs of the economy. As such the foundations of hospitality teaching in TAFE were during an era where governments were directing vocational education to increase its focus on the needs of industry. In addition, it was demand from industry that initiated qualifications in the area (Baume, 1999), as elite Sydney hotels in the late 1980s initiated professional development qualifications in the sector, before entering the market as private autonomous training providers themselves. In being established to meet the needs of specific industry partners, the overall orientation of these qualifications has a tendency towards maintaining this industry focus. While qualifications initially started at the diploma and advanced diploma level, various private providers and universities also began to offer degree level qualifications in hotel management during the 1990s. This has led to a heavily diversified sector, without clear qualification pathways. In addition, unlike the trades or nursing, where qualifications are regulated prerequisites for employment in the sector, hospitality qualifications are an optional aspect of professional development. This results in

qualifications in this area providing a much less clear pathway to working in the sector compared to the regulated areas of the trades and nursing: 72% of those who completed a nursing qualification (Wheelahan et al., 2012) and 71% of those who complete a trades qualification (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2017) are working in their industry, compared to just 29% of general vocational education graduates generally (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2015).

In addition to structuring qualifications in the sector, hospitality educations close connection with industry has been important to underpinning and determining its educational philosophies. Its origins within industry resulted in hospitality education being strongly practice-focused based on occupational experience (Baume, 1999). Over time the philosophy of hospitality education has grown from these strongly practice-oriented origins to gradually developing its own academic principles and ways of working (Kalargyrou & Wood, 2012; Morrison & Barry O'Mahony, 2003). However, there is still substantial debate over the level of connection with industry. Craig-Smith et al. (1994) and Pavesic (1993) both expressed concern about hospitality education becoming 'too' close to industry and developing a subservient approach to corporate practice, while others suggest increasing connection with industry is essential for keeping 'millennial' students engaged (Stierand & Zizka, 2015) and developing 'soft skills' (Kalargyrou, 2011). While there is debate around the level of industry influence within education, there is a base level of understanding that industry does have to be involved in these inherently practical qualifications, as Barrows and Bosselman (1999, p. 12) describe: 'for better or worse, we will always be tied to the industry for which we prepare our students'. Compared to the other areas in the study hospitality education is still developing and establishing its nascent knowledge base.

7.2.1   Embedded in industry: Hospitality teachers' view of their position

The teachers constructed themselves as having a very close relationship with the hospitality industry, highlighting similarities they share with workers in hospitality. Alex, a cookery teacher of nine years, described the hospitality teachers' relationship with industry as 'very robust', while Mina, a hospitality teacher of 16 years, explained this close connection: 'We connect with industry very well, because they do that well because they're typically sales people, and we do it well because we're typically sales people as well'. In foregrounding this joint identity as 'sales people' Mina emphasises their connection with industry, but also an

underlying orientation towards the commercial, in selling products. This connection was framed as a strength by the hospitality teachers as it meant they had the managerial and business skills required to thrive at TAFE since the marketization reforms. Omar, a hospitality teacher of fourteen years, characterised this connection as beneficial to all actors in the sector: 'great for the students, great for the faculty, very good for everybody'. This differed from other teachers in this study who constructed their identity around educational roles and experiences, emphasising that these were the attributes that allowed them to support students (see Chapter 6.2.1).

The teachers emphasised their liminal position between the VET and hospitality fields, by emphasising that they were more industry-oriented than other TAFE teachers, but more educationally-oriented than teachers in the private sector. Mina contrasted the skills that hospitality teachers gained from industry with other teaching areas within TAFE:

> a lot of [teachers] of other areas or head teachers and managers of other areas don't come from a management background, they come from a vocational background. Because we actually have all worked as hotel managers or department managers, or restaurant managers, we've all got that managerial skills, whereas a lot of other people that you work with, they've worked their way up from TAFE.

Rather than focus on the educational skills that come from 'working their way up' through TAFE, Mina highlights the managerial skills of the hospitality teachers as a strength. Understanding this as a central skill of a teacher diverges from traditional understandings of the key attributes and goals of teachers. However, the hospitality teachers still contrasted their experiences of TAFE with those of private colleges to reinforce their educational identity. Alex outlines her experience working for a private provider revealing her understandings of what a teacher should be: 'Some staff came in and just went through the motions, didn't care too much… it was just a disgrace. At TAFE there was much more of a sense that these were career educators as opposed to people who were opportunistic about making money'. Through juxtaposing the TAFE teachers as 'career educators' rather than being 'opportunistic about making money' she reinforces her identification within the educational field. This liminal position of the teachers suggests that they reside in a position at the boundaries of the field.

This liminal position appeared to be important for constructing what the hospitality teachers understood as legitimate tasks and activities for teachers to perform in VET. They drew on industry experience and connections to embrace activities that went beyond traditional in-classroom teaching and educational resource design. Alex characterised her understanding of teachers' role as 'much more diverse' than traditionally thought of, specifically highlighting increased networking with industry: 'part of all our jobs is going out and nurturing all those relationships and keeping that going'. Their ability to adapt their practices and embrace new roles was emphasized as a central strength of hospitality teachers. Mina's explanation of adaptability in contrast to other TAFE teachers is quoted in full, as it shows the balance between an educational focus and flexibility:

> I guess I think everyone specialises in different areas and some teachers like to just specialise in what they know… It's not that these people do a bad job. Sometimes it might be that they're just really happy teaching in the areas that they teach…Getting given a new role is always a lot of work involved. It's not easy. Some of us take it open heartedly and some of think that it's just a lot of work and there's no benefit.

This construction of change demonstrates the hospitality teachers' understanding of what hospitality education should be. Rather than 'just' teaching in the areas they teach, they valorise adapting to take on new roles and thinking 'outside the square'. This is distinctly different from those of the other teaching groups; rather than purely an educational role where they teach the area they specialise in, non-educational aspects of the role are highlighted as both important and valid. This reinforces the hospitality teachers' liminal position, as they draw on their flexibility and adaptability from the fast-changing hospitality sector, to accept a broader understanding of the activities involved in teaching.

7.2.2   'A customer-service oriented business': Hospitality teachers' understanding of the goals of VET

Throughout the interviews the hospitality teachers demonstrated that they viewed the VET sector through a more 'economic' lens than the other teachers. They specifically outlined drawing on the values of the hospitality sector to inform their understandings of VET, as Mina illustrates, 'I guess our industry too, being hospitality we're such a people person industry and customer-service orientated business that whether it's working for TAFE or working for industry they're the skills that I've brought in from industry'. This shaped what

the hospitality teachers valorised as important in vocational education, resulting in them conceiving of the sector in economic terms and adopting a more utilitarian conception of the goals of VET.

The hospitality teachers conceived vocational education from an economic frame of reference. One way this was revealed was through their discussion of student fees being too cheap in the past: 'Whereas before, the course would be way too cheap. That's because we had a bigger bucket of money from the government and we could offer courses at the very economical price. Reality was though, that we were heavily subsidising those courses' (Marco). This conception of education is based on the premise that the market should dictate the price, and the government subsidising the cost is not feasible or beneficial. This reflects a *laisse-faire* belief in markets producing the appropriate price for educational qualifications. Marco further elaborated that the increased price had the additional benefit of improving the motivation of students: 'Because the students are paying a higher fee for their course these days. Good part of it is, they're doing their research… the calibre of students actually is really great. They're passionate, they're interested, they've done their research'. In conceptualising higher fees as gatekeeping student quality, Marco's beliefs about the purpose of VET is divergent from traditional 'second chance education' motives of the sector. However, other hospitality teachers did argue for a more 'educational' conception of the sector, as Alex demonstrates in emphasizing the importance of public providers, 'I mean I'm a big believer in public education because you have to have, socially speaking, you have to have some institution out there that's not just about making money'. Within this, she clearly outlines her belief in the importance of having educational organisations who are not profit-motived, suggesting a position incorporating educational and economic practices.

Rather than the broader educational mission which other teachers within TAFE emphasised, the hospitality teachers' economic conception of the field resulted in them focusing on providing students with skills and employment opportunities. Mina directly raises this issue, 'There's no use being great at studying and getting great distinctions if when we put them back into industry they can't actually work, or they don't have the practical skills'. This contrasts strongly with the rhetoric of the trades and nursing teachers in emphasising the importance of developing disciplinary knowledge, as nursing teacher Jennifer argued: 'it's not just learning a skill and regurgitating it. It's actually understanding why you're learning this skill'. This focus on skills development over disciplinary knowledge correlates with their

understanding of the overarching purpose of VET: student employability. Mina acknowledges this, 'What my aim really is to do, is to get them job ready', while describing strategies to achieve this which are largely non-educational: 'they're teed up with the right people, they've got the right networks, they've got the right connections, they've been working in a team, they're working in an area that they at least know that they love, and are far more employable'. Rather than focusing on the knowledge learned, Mina highlights TAFE's ability to connect students with employers and provide connections. Alex echoed this focus on employability, 'they participate in this work placement and a lot of them end up with jobs, which is kind of supposed to be the greater goal'. While employability has always been a central part of vocational education, other teachers placed greater emphasis on other objectives, such as developing students' knowledge or general education, as the central purpose of the field. However, it is important to emphasise that while the teachers frame these goals through employability, rather than developing disciplinary knowledge, it is still focused on the potential benefits to the student, rather than meeting the needs of industry.

7.2.3 Hospitality teachers' autonomy codes

The hospitality teachers occupied a liminal position in the field, at the boundaries of education and hospitality. They shared a focus on remaining closely connected with industry as being central to their identity, and essential to being a successful hospitality teacher within TAFE, while still emphasising the educational aspects of their role. Furthermore, they adopted a wider definition of teaching than the other case studies, emphasising the many diverse aspects of the role that they understood as legitimate, including a number of less educationally-oriented activities. Some of the teachers appeared to value their connection to other fields as their primary currency in education. However, they still understood their role as being fundamentally educational, identifying as actors in the educational field, not simply residing there as temporary workers, suggesting they embody *stronger positional autonomy*. However, in looking beyond the field to structure their identity it suggests weaker positional autonomy than other groups in the study, locating them very close to the boundaries of the field, or what can be termed an *ancillary* position (PA+) rather than the *core* position (PA++) of the trades teachers.

The teachers' close connection with industry appeared to colour their understanding of the purpose of VET as they incorporated many of the portable values from hospitality within

their conception of the sector. The teachers conceived of the sector in largely 'economic' terms, extolling the benefits of markets for economic efficiency and improving student ability, rather than focusing primarily on educational quality. This extended to their understanding of the purpose of the sector, defining it in more utilitarian terms than the other teachers, in focusing on its goals as giving students skills and enabling employment. This perspective is divergent from many of the autonomous goals of the field. However, while they framed the sector in economic terms, they consistently focused on providing the best experience for students, rather than purely serving the needs of industry partners. This reflects the teachers attempt to marry goals that look both towards internal values of the field and outwards towards economic values, locating them at the boundaries of the field. Ultimately, they champion educational objectives, reflecting *stronger relational autonomy*, but valorise other principles within the field as well – they emphasized what are termed *ancillary* purposes (RA+), rather than the *core* purposes (RA++) espoused by both the nursing and trades teachers.

In sum, the hospitality teachers portrayed themselves as occupying an *ancillary* position of stronger positional autonomy (PA+) and as valorising *ancillary* purposes of stronger relational autonomy (RA+): a *sovereign code*, but one close to the borders of the code (PA+, RA+). Figure 7.1 displays the relative position within the sovereign code of the autonomy plane, with their close connection to industry and utilitarian framing of the sector placing them near the boundaries of the field. This liminal position at the edge of the field provides a strong contrast with both the nursing and trades teachers who were more deeply within the sovereign code. The hospitality teachers appeared to be aware of their different position in the field of other TAFE teachers, as evidenced by consistently highlighting their differences from other areas. This raises the question of whether the hospitality teachers characterize and respond to marketization reforms differently to the other teaching areas who are more deeply embedded within the field. The following section will explore their characterization of the marketization reforms.

```
              PA+

  projected              sovereign


RA−           ◯               RA+


   exotic               introjected

              PA−
```
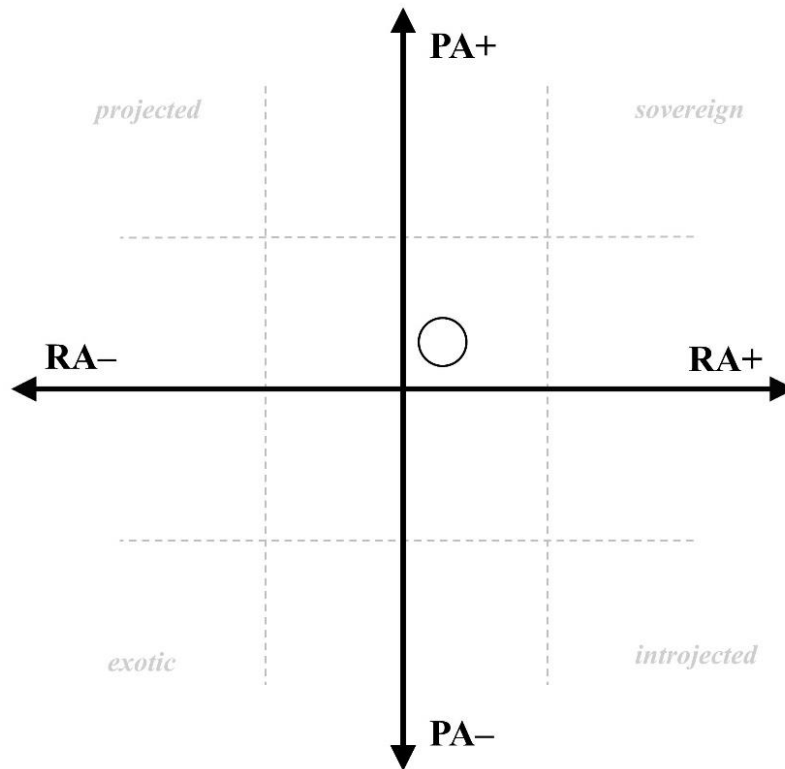
Figure 7.1. Autonomy code of the hospitality teachers

7.3   HOSPITALITY TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF MARKETIZATION REFORMS

The hospitality teachers' liminal position within the field is reflected in how they constructed the marketization reforms. Similarly to the other teachers, they identified reforms as originating outside the vocational education field and being based upon external values. However, they differed from the other teachers in focusing less on the origins and values of reforms and not emphasising how much they clashed with the traditional values of vocational education.

7.3.1   External directions: Origin of reforms

The reforms were characterised as originating outside the field of education entirely. Alex explains the origin of new frameworks in the sector: 'everyone here wants to do something that's good for the students, but we have to work within the framework of funding sources and a lot of those funding sources are not decided by TAFE, it's decided by the Government'. She differentiates that it is not senior management in TAFE who have altered the policy

143

framework of the sector, but more specifically wider government regulations, to which TAFE has responded. This indicates that she views 'frameworks of funding sources' as designed by agents external to the field, which limit the ability of those within the field ('everyone here' referring to teachers) to function as desired. Mina describes a second characteristic of reforms, that once they are incorporated into VET they are implemented in a top-down fashion:

> A lot of things do come from above. A lot of things come from our strategic plan, but they talk to us and tell us about being in industry. I guess when we hear stuff like that in this faculty, we generally say, "Yeah, we are". We're doing it already.

This reflects a clear conception that changes are directed from above. However, Mina describes more of a conversation around changes than the uni-directional directives the other teaching sections described, such as trades teacher Marks questioning of 'I don't know how much currency teacher feedback gets'. Furthermore, Mina's comments indicate that the hospitality teachers take pride in being ahead of changes by innovating similar ideas themselves, indicating that while they may not have initiated the reforms, they were more aligned with them.

7.3.2 Foreign but familiar: Values of the reforms

The reforms were characterised as being founded upon economic, rather than educational, principles. The teachers emphasised that these changes were more impactful than those in the past. Marco, who has taught at TAFE for 16 years, described it as such, 'There has always been notions of reform but not this bad. Like they might have talked a bit about it but nothing actually, nothing ever happened. And then it finally happened, five years ago'. The teachers characterised this recent shift as embracing a commercially-oriented perspective of vocational education. When describing the key values imbued in reforms Omar characterized them as 'I think now we are focused on costs and there is much more about finance and budget' and a general conception that now 'everyone has to pay for their education' based upon the 'market value price'. Similarly, Marco understood reforms as directing teachers towards 'cutting budgets and making us do what we can to compete with privates'. In construing reforms introducing cost-cutting as a central goal of the sector, and educational markets being a means to motivate this, the teachers characterised the reforms as based on values divergent with the traditional principles of vocational education.

144

7.3.3 Autonomy code of reforms

While the hospitality teachers did not describe their understandings of the origins of the reforms in as much depth as the other teaching groups, they still described a clear conception of the reforms' external origins. They identified government as the primary driver of reforms, even though they felt more consulted about the direction of reforms than the other teaching areas. Additionally, they understood the reforms as being implemented within the field in a top-down fashion by senior managers, rather than instigated by educators, further emphasising the 'non-educational' origins of the reforms. The teachers' descriptions of the reforms being initiated from outside of VET reflects *weaker positional autonomy*. They characterised government policy makers as distant from actual educating, embodying a position *unassociated* with the field (PA– –).

In terms of the purpose of reforms, the hospitality teachers perceived the reforms as shifting the sector towards economic efficiency, utilizing the mechanism of markets and competition. They understood these goals as divergent from the traditional educational yardsticks of the sector, reflecting *weaker relational autonomy*. These new goals were framed entirely in terms of their economic costs and benefits without reference to any educational outcomes, indicating an *unassociated* purpose (RA– –). Figure 7.2 combines this analysis to display the hospitality teachers' conception of the reforms occupying a position deep inside the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –), as they understood the reforms as originating outside the VET field and based upon values foreign to the field. The hospitality teachers' lack of discussion characterizing the reforms compared to the other case studies can potentially be explained by their liminal positioning near the boundaries of the field. While the other teaching groups found the origins and principles of the reforms jarring as they were so foreign to their own, the hospitality teachers were more accepting of reforms. The following section will further investigate this in exploring the hospitality teachers' descriptions of the effects and their responses to reforms.
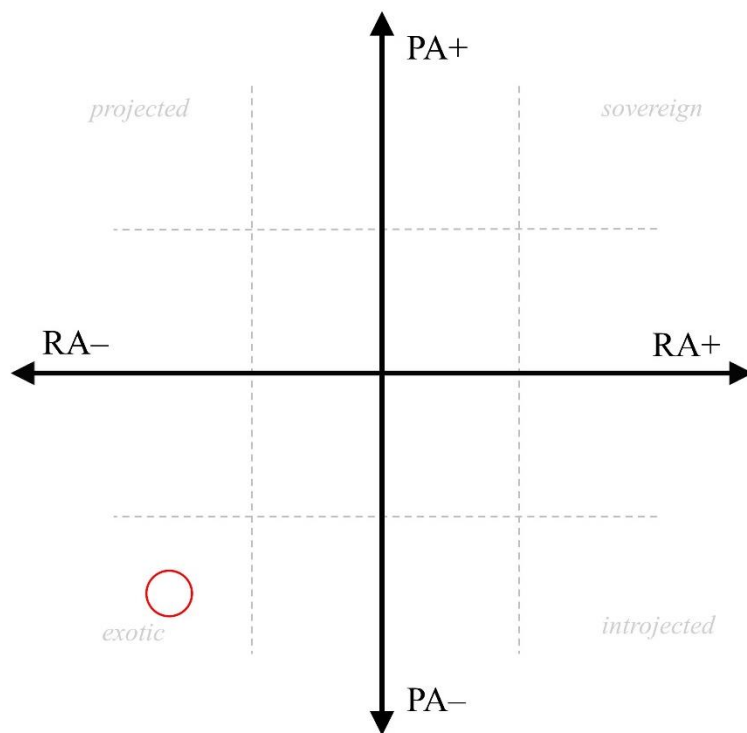
Figure 7.2. Autonomy code of the hospitality teachers' characterization of marketization reforms

7.4 EFFECTS OF REFORMS – THE VIEW FROM HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

While the hospitality teachers characterized the reforms as being traditionally alien to the VET sector, they described the effects and reacted to the changes differently to the other teachers in the study. The hospitality teachers consistently emphasised that their close connection with their industry provided them with relevant skills enabling them to adapt to the reforms, with many of the new expectations in regards to their role in TAFE being familiar to them due to their industry experience. Similarly, they were able to embrace the shifting values of the sector, as VET increasingly aligned with the commercially-focused principles they were accustomed to from working within hospitality.

7.4.1 Embedded in industry: Changes in work roles

In a similar manner to the other teachers in the study, the hospitality teachers described increased expectations to adopt a variety of new roles, particularly those involving working with industry. Moreover, they described an integration with industry that was more substantial and encompassing than that outlined by either of the other teaching sections.

However, unlike the other sections, the hospitality teachers felt they were able to successfully adapt to these roles, actively embracing them and extolling their legitimacy within the field. The hospitality teachers were aware that this ability and acceptance was unusual within TAFE, arguing that it was their close connection with the hospitality industry in the past that primed them for this flexibility. Having said this, the hospitality staff were able to identify other changes in the role caused by marketization reforms that they found problematic and unsatisfying.

The hospitality teachers suggested that due to marketization reforms, managing their relationship with industry partners has become an increasingly central part of their work. The introduction of the competitive training market prompted teachers to connect with industry partners in order to ensure placements for students, as well as to understand the concerns and wants of industry. This expectation of TAFE was clear to the teachers: 'the word was, if you weren't industry current, you're diminishing your opportunity to continue teaching' (Omar). Alex describes the regularity of this connection, 'I would say two thirds of my weeks are out in the industry visiting someone', while Marco characterizes the teachers as 'Constantly in dialogue with them [industry partners]'. While teachers in the trades and hospitality would connect with industry to ensure their teaching mirrored best-practice, the hospitality teachers appeared to have a different relationship with industry, as Alex describes:

> You're going out and you're like a salesperson, you just sit and have a coffee with them and chat with them and talk about your programmes and they tell you what's going on with them you know, they'll ask you, "Do you have any students, any housekeeper students you could send along, we're looking for this person," and you're borderline recruiters…which isn't really teaching.

Alex identifies a fundamental shift in her role in suggesting that these new expectations of her being a 'salesperson', a 'borderline recruiter' or in 'nurturing' relationships with industry are not 'really teaching'. As it moves away from traditional teaching activities towards these more business-focused roles, teaching in this area increasingly becomes a role outside the educational field. While other teaching areas framed this issue as prioritizing either industry or student needs, Mina framed it as mutually beneficial, in that for the students, 'they end up working in luxury hotels or five star hotels that they'd never have ever imagined. They would never have actually been able to do that on their own'. This viewpoint rejects the idea of being industry-focused or student-focused as mutually incompatible goals.

One of the hospitality teachers, Mina, provides an illuminating case study into how the role of teachers has fundamentally changed within TAFE. Rather than being an educationalist who occasionally facilitated work placements, Mina largely works in industry facilitating occasional education:

> Now actually I don't do very much, actually I don't do any teaching face to face with the students anymore. I do a lot more project work and at the moment, I actually work here two days a week with [her manager] and two days a week at the international convention centre. I've been contracted out to them working on a project partnership between TAFE and the ICC and we organise all their induction training and I work on site there figuring out all their training needs that they may have in-house…I've gone from being a teacher to also taking on the role as like a business account manager…a lot of the processing of product offerings, getting funding, doing costings with my teachers

As Mina describes, while employed as a teacher within TAFE, she does not perform any in-classroom teaching. While teachers in other sections were dismayed that non-educational tasks diminished the time they had for lesson preparation, Mina was the extreme example of this in not doing any face-to-face teaching. Her role includes many aspects that were encouraged by marketization reforms: embracing industry connection, a project-based work style and an increased focus on marketing. While these activities are all oriented towards providing education for students, they are divorced from actual educating.

Considering that the other teachers in the study were affronted by considerably less substantive shifts in role, the above example leads to the question of how the hospitality teachers responded to this dramatic change. The teachers were initially apprehensive about the changes as the educational components of their work became increasingly diluted among a number of other expectations, as Marco illustrates: 'Our first reaction was, "Well, we are teachers? Are we salespeople? What are we?" The whole message got lost and we weren't quite sure what the job description was all of a sudden'. However, the hospitality teachers were largely able to successfully adapt to this new role which involved marketing, connecting with businesses and evaluating the business viability of courses, as Marco further explains:

> We have job descriptions that are sort of 360 degrees. The teaching is in there somewhere but there's also all this other stuff. But that's okay…The expectation was on us to do more and more. We, I guess in a way, we've become a part of it now. That's what we do.

This acceptance of the legitimacy of these new roles as part of being a teacher differs substantially with the other teaching sections, who were less successful in adapting to these changing expectations. This contrast is further emphasised by what the hospitality teachers did not discuss. Compared to the other teaching sections, the hospitality teachers rarely mentioned the increase in compliance, nor did they denigrate the role of management in 'forcing' roles upon them to nearly the extent of other teaching sections. The hospitality teachers were aware of other TAFE teachers' scepticism to the new roles, suggesting that in contrast to other teachers they framed this as an opportunity, rather than a burden: 'some teachers like to just specialise in what they know. Perhaps they're a little bit scared or not so much scared, perhaps unwilling to think outside that square and I guess some of them may not have skills set to do it' (Mina).

In being aware that they were able to adapt to these shifting roles more easily than other teachers within TAFE, the hospitality teachers pinpointed their historical close connection with industry as the reason for this. Their attitude towards increased expectations in regards to compliance demonstrates this. Alex suggested that the VET regulator (ASQA) became more active in response to reforms due to the prevalence of 'dodgy' private providers in the industry, with the result for TAFE teachers that 'ASQA became more prominent and much more demanding of what they wanted to remain compliant and remain certified'. Their understanding of, and close connection with, industry allowed the hospitality teachers to engage with these requirements, as Marco outlines: 'Validation, which is a necessary beast. You need to validate, we need to validate, and we do that, again, with industry networking. We have a panel that comes in and we go through our assessment and we pass it by the industry'. This displays a willingness to adapt and a level of acceptance of compliance, that contrasted with the trades teachers who characterized it as 'ticking boxes to justify your existence' (Chapter 6.4.1). The acknowledgement of it as a 'necessary beast' reflects the hospitality teachers' greater acceptance of the legitimacy of this new role within the field.

However, there were some new aspects of the role for which the hospitality teachers' connection with industry did not prepare them. The teachers emphasised their heavy workload in recent times, 'we're so busy' (Omar) and 'it is manic… we just keep our heads above water' (Alex). The teachers cited new student management software (EBS) as increasing the administrative workload of teachers: 'EBS, like it or hate it, it creates more work' (Alex) and 'not very user-friendly…very time consuming' (Marco). Furthermore, the

increasing complexity of student fee arrangements connected with the opening up of the vocational education marketplace was highlighted as increasing the administrative responsibilities of teachers. Omar explains the convoluted fee system:

> In a class of 30 students you can have all variations of how they paid. International students, they could be on Centrelink, they could be student loan, VET Student Loan, or the old scheme, the VET Help. They could pay upfront, they might have a grant or scholarship. There's so many variations. At the end of the day, it's us, the teacher, who's delivering in the classroom and we've got to put their attendance in and if they're not enrolled correctly or there's still something going on with their payment.

Omar suggests that this additional complexity in the sector meant that teachers' administrative role in terms of policing student fees increased. He further suggested that now 'the first 15 minutes of each class is administrative' due to this increased complexity. Finally, the teachers discussed that they had lost administrative support positions and increased class sizes, putting further pressure on the teachers as Alex describes, 'having a smaller core base to actually undertake all of this work, then having class sizes that were sometimes 30, 40, 50% bigger than previously'. Teachers found this increase in administrative workload frustrating, particularly as it comes at the expense of class time, as for most teachers 'their least happiest time is doing administrative stuff' (Omar). As such, while the teachers were able to adapt and embrace some of the new roles expected of them under the reforms, there were certain aspects that frustrated them and diminished their conception of their work.

7.4.2   The business of educating: Changes in work goals

The marketization reforms were described as shifting the goals of the sector to be economically-oriented. This alteration of the purpose of the field had a large range of impacts, with the teachers specifically arguing that it altered the way TAFE conceived of both students and teachers. As such, the teachers pinpointed similar shifts in the values of VET as the other teachers in the study, however, in contrast they were able to largely embrace these changing values. The teachers adapted to the changes by drawing on their experiences from the commercially-oriented hospitality industry and applying them to vocational education. The teachers did express concern about the extent of the reforms, particularly in areas where they clashed with educational principles the teachers upheld as important.

The overarching shift identified by the hospitality teachers was the alteration of the baseline yardstick of the sector to be 'economic' rather than 'educational'. TAFE departments were now required to run as businesses, or as Marco describes: 'now we are focused on costs and there is much more about finances and budgets'. This provided teachers with a new set of priorities to be balanced with educational quality. Marco outlines how these changing goals have affected teachers' behaviour and decisions:

> We're educating students and the leaders of tomorrow, but at the same time, we can't run loss-making courses anymore. That's not good for business. Sometimes you have to make those decisions. As long as we're meeting the requirements, we believe that the students need qualification, they feel satisfied with the educational output, then we do have the tough business decisions to make.

This conception of designing and implementing courses within TAFE is engrained with values from the business sector, being applied to providing education. While Marco identifies the tension between educational goals and business goals, it is clear that these business goals are given primacy; while they will try to 'meet the requirements' when it comes to educational provision, they definitely 'can't run loss-making courses anymore'. Teachers articulated a tension between embracing these new business principles and upholding educational values, as Alex explains in regards to rising class sizes: 'If you've got a class of 40…if you want the students to achieve the outcomes when there's more of them in a class and you don't have as much support, a lot of it falls on the teachers'. In highlighting the extra effort needed to be put in by teachers to maintain the same standard of educational quality, Alex emphasises that these changes make delivering high-quality education harder for teachers. However, unlike the other sections which described this reconceptualization of the sector as 'bullshit' (Chapter 6.4.2), the hospitality teachers were more accepting of these logics. Alex outlines reconciling these two belief systems, 'I used to be it should all be about making the educational experience for the student as enriching as possible, and I do get it, we have to make money or there's not going to be anywhere for students to come'. The hospitality teachers identified two major ways TAFE's changing values were rendered visible: the reconceptualization of students and teachers in the sector.

Students were increasingly conceived in terms of how much revenue they could generate for TAFE: 'full fee paying students, students who don't get the Smart and Skilled subsidy, they make a lot of money, we're happy to take those and a big international cohort' (Alex). After

the marketization reforms of 2015 different types of students (domestic, international, centrelink funded etc.) attracted different levels of government funding. The increased pressure for teaching sections to be profitable, motivated these sections to run courses that attracted the most lucrative types of students. Funding systems began to direct course development and enrolment targets, as Alex further outlines, 'there's a big focus on driving those kind of programmes. As I said a lot of those programmes that attract a lot of funding, are ones that meet the needs of the industry'. In targeting revenue generating students, Alex describes how other students are less catered for by TAFE:

> You have to achieve a balance as a public educator, because there are people who may not succeed in a gung ho, whizz bang placement programme, but they still have a place in society, so it's hard to strike that balance where you are meeting all those requirements.

Within this, she indicates that the public educator has responsibilities that go beyond simply supplying labour to industries, and involve providing more support for disadvantaged students, on which TAFE is now less focused. She connects this increase in industry focus, with diminishing support for disadvantaged students: 'A lot more prevalent when I started in TAFE, there used to be a lot more money for student support, learner support … it's bit less about just supporting the disadvantaged students and a bit more towards supporting industry'. This reconceptualization towards perceiving students in terms of revenue, results in a shift away from some of the social justice motives that were embedded in policy documents which framed VET as 'second chance' education.

The reprioritization of the sector around economic goals additionally resulted in TAFE shifting what it valued among its teachers. Within TAFE, business and marketing skills among teachers were foregrounded, while disciplinary knowledge and pedagogic practice were sidelined. As Mina described above, she was increasingly involved in coordinating training specifically for one industry partner, a large hospitality centre, coordinating their training in a range of areas: 'All their first aid training, their white card training, their rigging and dogging, that's all these things I had to go and work out. What is rigging and dogging? Hello? Can you tell me?'.[21] Her disconnection from the knowledge involved in educating is a strong departure from the language of the other teaching areas as they consistently focused on the importance of expert disciplinary knowledge. In addition to this Mina described feeling

---

[21] Rigging and dogging are processes involved in the creation of scaffolds.

substantially less connected with students than she did in the past, lamenting this as a side-effect of her increasingly non-educational role: 'It's unfortunate now I don't have a very large connection to students here. I still go and visit classes and I still talk about the different programmes, and they still know who I am. I don't know them as closely as I did'. The connection with students, and providing them holistic support, was consistently highlighted as an essential aspect of teaching by both the nursing and trades teachers. Mina's comments are a stark departure from this as she becomes further disconnected from the central tasks of educating.

These changing values were further emphasised by what TAFE defined as being a successful teacher. While other teachers within the study complained of not having their skills recognised, Mina was very open that she felt TAFE valued her skills highly and rewarded her for them, as she describes, 'I won three TAFE awards last year, I had one in 2014. I'm very valued in terms of that... I'll jinx myself, but I've always said that at TAFE I've been highly recognised'. Mina displayed a range of business and marketing savvy that was seen as exceptional by TAFE and was recognised through multiple teaching awards. Receiving teaching awards, while no longer performing any in-class educating, demonstrates the shifting values within TAFE. These awards reflect the value TAFE places upon the ability to develop connections with industry and promote business growth, in comparison to providing high quality teaching. This indicates an understanding of teachers and education based on 'economic' principles in which 'educational' qualities are sidelined.

The shifting values of the sector highlighted above, resonate with many of the concerns raised by both the hospitality and trades teachers. However, while the hospitality teachers perceived similar changes in the field, they responded to these changes in a fundamentally different way: adapting to the reforms and embracing the new values. Moreover, they were conscious that compared to other areas of VET, they were more successful in adapting to the top-down reforms, as Mina explains:

> We have a strategic plan that we have to meet and it gets disseminated down by the channels. I always look at this faculty as being a lot more progressive than a lot of others… With respect to a lot of other, I'm sure you've probably heard, there's a lot of other faculties that really just, they don't like change. We're continuously changing.

The teachers identified their close connection with industry as one of the primary reasons they were able to adapt and embrace the logics of business, as Marco suggests, 'a lot of the teachers here are from industry and have got an industry focus so we are pretty much okay to adapt'. Marco specifically highlights drawing on their industry experience to adapt successfully to changes, allowing them to comprehend and even see the legitimacy in economic principles being incorporated into vocational education. This suggests that the initial positioning of the teachers in the field is important – in not being long-term occupants of the VET sector, the hospitality teachers were able to draw on their connections and understandings from the hospitality industry to interpret reforms in education.

While the hospitality teachers largely embraced these changing values, they still found some effects of reforms problematic, particularly those which clashed with their educational beliefs. For example, Alex utilised her previous experience at a private provider to illustrate the potential problems of a solely commercial focus, describing the experience as: 'I didn't like it, it was about the money. TAFE was very different, TAFE was very much about what was educationally sound'. She further outlines how this plays out in problematic ways in the classroom 'in the private college you could have 27 in the kitchen… with sometimes 12 burners, so you would have more than two students crowded around one burner'. Alex characterizes the private providers goal of being 'about the money' resulting in them increasing class sizes to create an experience that is not educationally sound. While she constructed TAFE as formerly embodying a position of being educationally focused she did suggest that 'TAFE now has bigger classes', resulting in 'a lot of it falling on the teachers' to ensure educational quality did not diminish. While the teachers were able to adapt to shifting principles of the sector, they found it problematic when these changes impacted the quality of education. This could reflect the hospitality teachers' initial position at the boundaries of the field; they are able to draw on values from beyond the field, yet still hold to some core educational principles.

7.4.3   The effects of reforms – autonomy codes

Similarly to the other teachers areas, the hospitality teachers described an increased pressure from management to adopt a wider variety of roles within VET. They highlighted the biggest shifts as increasing expectations in regard to liaising with industry, managing business relationships and course financial viability assessing. The common theme among these new

roles was a less educational focus, involving less in-classroom educating and student support, reflecting a position that embodies *weaker positional autonomy*. These different examples represent different strengths of positional autonomy, from an *associated* purpose (increasing industry integration) to an *unassociated* purpose (financial viability assessments). However, the teachers still described the cumulative effect of these changes as constructing their role as at a substantial distance from educating, or in Mina's case with no connection to educating, which can be coded as a position *unassociated* with the field (PA– –). Unlike the other teachers in the study, the hospitality teachers were largely unperturbed by this change and described themselves as being able to adapt to these new roles outside the educational field. They emphasised drawing on the flexibility which is highly valued in the hospitality industry to adapt and embrace these more economically-focused practices. One potential explanation for this difference between the teachers is that their initial position within the field is important for how they adapt to new roles. The hospitality teachers more recent entry to the field, and dual identity with their industry, allowed them to connect with and integrate more easily with this industry.

Furthermore, the hospitality teachers described a major effect of the reforms as altering the traditional goals of the sector to align them with economic principles. The teachers suggested that the reorientation of the field towards the goal of profitability resulted in legitimizing the targeting of 'profitable' students, giving industry more control over teaching content, reducing spending on student support and altering how TAFE valued its teachers. These different examples represent different strengths of relational autonomy, from an *ancillary* purpose (targeting student employment) to an *unassociated* purpose (giving industry more control over content). While these new, different values reflected a range of strengths of relational autonomy, they can be grouped together in weakening the relational autonomy of the sector. The increasing prioritization of these goals resulted in a corresponding deprioritization of educational goals. Within this, the increasing valorisation of non-educational attributes suggested to some teachers that the shift had been substantial, with economic goals given increasing primacy, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose within the field (RA– –). Figure 7.3 displays the coding of the hospitality teachers' conception of how the goals of the sector have changed as the field is increasingly oriented towards principles from beyond the VET sector. The hospitality teachers described these pressures as coming from management, although they were largely able to reconcile themselves with these changing goals, accepting them as valid in the sector. Their close connection with industry was

emphasised by the teachers in making them adaptable to changes, while providing them insights and experiences as to the workings of a more commercially-oriented field. Applying this knowledge of business principles to ways of working in vocational education in the post-reform environment was more intuitive and legitimate for the hospitality teachers. However, the divergent opinions among these teachers about the re-orientation towards industry can be understood by their different understandings of the role of VET, outlined in section 7.2, with teachers embodying weaker positional autonomy more accepting of these industry-focused changes.

Bringing together the above, the teachers suggested marketization policies had substantial effects on their work at TAFE. They felt increased expectation to adopt a wider variety of roles, most of which were less educationally oriented than their previous work. Additionally, they understood the goals of the sector as being reorganised based on a commercial understanding of vocational education, resulting in changes to their practice to be more directed towards these new business objectives. In terms of autonomy codes, the arrow in Figure 7.3 displays the push felt by the teachers from their position at the border of the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+) into the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). However, in contrast to the other teachers in the study the hospitality teachers reported being willing and able to successfully adapt to this new position, resulting in less frustration with the policy shift. Alex illustrates their acknowledgement and acceptance of the changes: 'I suppose the staff are putting extra effort into keeping those values alive, but no one here, I don't think, very few people here are angry at TAFE for making the changes'. This provides a strong contrast with other teachers in the study who were quite angry with TAFE's responses to reforms. This divergence in attitudes towards the reforms can be potentially explained by the autonomy codes of the various teaching groups, with the hospitality teachers being more closely aligned with the reforms, requiring less of a code shift than the other groups.
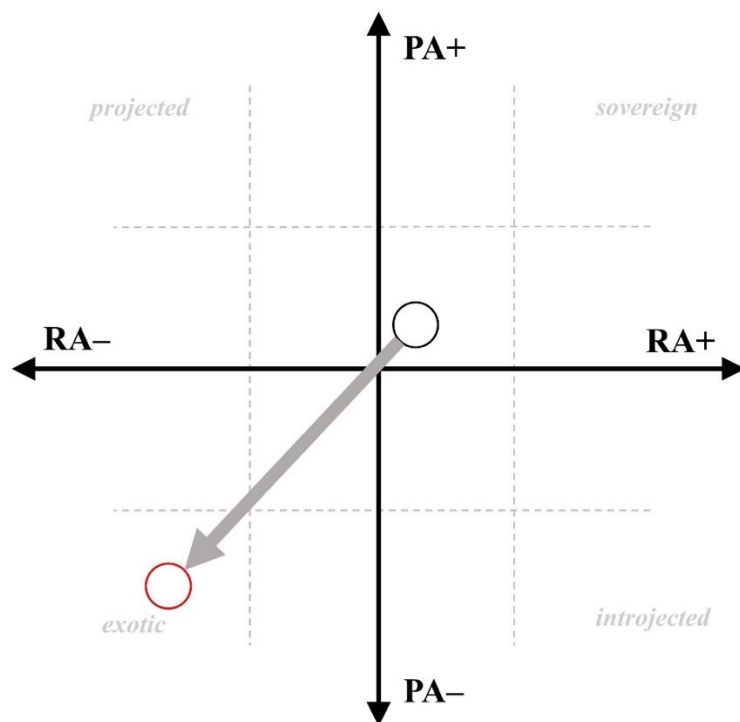
Figure 7.3. Hospitality teachers' conceptions of the effects of reforms on their role in vocational education.

7.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to provide additional insight into how different areas of vocational education responded to marketization reforms. The chapter examined a third area of VET, hospitality education, which contrasted with the proceeding areas by being both a newcomer to the VET field and having a commercially-oriented associated industry. In order to contrast these teachers to other areas in VET, the chapter initially located the teachers within the field of vocational education, before examining their characterisation of the reforms and their descriptions of their impacts. The hospitality teachers consistently emphasised their close connection to industry as central to their educational identity, positioning them near the boundaries of the VET field embodying an *associated* role in the field reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+). Their close connection to the commercially-oriented hospitality industry appeared to shape their conception of vocational education, as they were able to understand how the logics of business may work in vocational education. Within this, they still framed the sector in terms of educational goals even if economic principles were given legitimacy, reflecting an *associated* purpose of the field that embodies *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+). As such, the hospitality teachers characterized themselves as having a dual

identity incorporating practices from both education and hospitality, while also bringing the economic 'ways of thinking' from hospitality into their teaching, resulting in them embodying a position at the border of the field within the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+).

From their position at the boundary of the field the hospitality teachers identified that the reforms originated from outside the sector. They understood reforms being instigated by government agents at a substantial distance from actual educating, reflecting an *unassociated* origin: *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Additionally, they identified these reforms as based upon values systems external to education, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose: *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). Bringing these together, the hospitality teachers could be characterised as perceiving the reforms as originating from the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). Compared to the other teachers in the study this group spent less time discussing the origins of the reforms. This could potentially have been because of their position at the border of the field, the external marketization reforms were less 'foreign' to them, than to the teachers who were more deeply engrained in the VET sector.

Even though the hospitality teachers started from a position near the border of the field, they still felt the reforms pressured them to shift their practices. They described the increased expectation to embrace non-educational roles in the sector: reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). In addition, they perceived the reforms as incorporating an economic understanding of education, where teachers were directed to pursue goals of profitability and efficiency: reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). Based on this, the teachers felt pressured to adopt an increasingly non-educational role that was directed towards non-educational goals, embodying a position in the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). However, the hospitality teachers discussed how their close connection with their industry made them more adaptable to these reforms and more willing to accept diverse roles within VET. Similarly, this background in, and connection with, the commercially-oriented hospitality industry, resulted in them having a good understanding of the logics of business, and an openness to these logics being applied to the educational field. This familiarity allowed the teachers to adapt, and in some cases embrace, the shifting values of the sector in pursuing these new economic goals. This was in stark contrast to some of the other teachers in the study who found the reforms incongruous and discordant.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

8.1   INTRODUCTION

This study set out to understand how public sector teachers in vocational education experienced, understood and negotiated marketization reforms. It aimed to examine how teachers mediated the seemingly antithetical values embodied within neoliberalism and the educational field. It focused on teachers within vocational education, as a sector that has historically been heavily impacted by marketization reforms. Due to the diversity of the VET field, the thesis incorporated three case studies into different areas of vocational education to investigate whether reforms were experienced differently in various positions within the field.

This concluding chapter will first present the overarching approach chosen for researching vocational education reform, including the logic of the research, the gaps in existing knowledge which it was looking to fill, and the theoretical tools and methods enacted to do so. Second, it will summarize the findings of the research before comparing the responses between the three case studies examined in order to address the research questions of the thesis. Third, it will outline the study's contribution to knowledge in terms of the substantive and theoretical implications of the findings. Lastly, the chapter will outline some of the limitations of the study and potential areas for future research.

8.2   RESEARCHING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION REFORMS

The research presented in this thesis involved an exploratory study of teachers in the Australian public VET sector adapting to marketization reforms. Chapter 1 presented the context of the research in this thesis, highlighting the contrasting values between neoliberal reforms and the educational field. This thesis aimed to examine how public sector teachers experienced this clash of values under neoliberal reforms. The research location of the vocational education sector in Australia was justified, as the weak autonomy of the field has resulted in it being a regular site for neoliberal reforms. The most recent of these, the *Smart and Skilled* reforms of 2015, provided the impetus for the study of TAFE teachers in NSW. The introduction also identified one of the key features of the VET field – its diversity

compared to other educational sectors. Based upon this, the research aimed to investigate whether this diversity resulted in marketization reforms having substantially different impacts in different areas of the field. To investigate these concerns the thesis targeted three primary research questions:

1. How do public sector teachers in vocational education understand and characterize marketization reforms?
2. How do these teachers describe the effects of these reforms?
3. Do teachers in different locations of the VET field experience marketization reforms differently?

Chapter 2 assessed previous research on the topic for how it could inform the current thesis. It examined three primary areas of research which were aimed at examining marketization reforms in education: large-scale 'macro' studies of how policies impacted whole educational fields, narrowly focused 'micro' studies that investigated how teachers interpreted and adapted to reforms, and studies that focused on the specific identities of vocational education teachers. The 'macro' studies utilised quantitative data and/or policy document analysis to provide valuable illustrations of how reforms effect the distribution of funding and training within the field, while also pinpointing contradictions and problems with the underlying logics of reforms. The second body of literature focused on the impacts of marketization reforms on teachers. This group of 'micro' level studies of the impacts on teachers adopted a number of approaches, including critically analysing policies using sociological theory for what impacts they would have on teachers, empirical researching teachers to gather their perspectives on reforms, and research that combined both approaches in using a sociological theory to analyse teachers' empirical responses. Finally, the chapter examined 'teacher identity' research which investigated how teachers in vocational education develop distinct teacher identities, due to working at the intersection of occupational and educational practices. This research used primarily qualitative methods to demonstrate how VET teachers developed 'dual professional' identities in the sector, explaining how these identities resulted in VET teachers being a highly fragmented group.

After reviewing this literature four needs were identified in Chapter 2.5 for the current study to adequately address its research questions. First, to not reduce what happens in vocational education to factors from beyond the field, as if it just reflects policy changes. Second, to provide a space for the voice of teachers to contribute to the policy process and policy

literature. Third, to be able to differentiate the field of vocational education, not treating it as a uniform, homogenous whole. Lastly, to go beyond the teachers' substantive descriptions of reform by conceptualising them with a theoretical framework.

These four concerns guided the thesis in adopting an approach that would allow the research to meet these needs, which was outlined in Chapter 3. The research used Bourdieu's field theory as an organising framework, allowing it to conceptualise the field of vocational education as a distinct object of study, with its own 'refraction coefficient' that impacts the forms taken by marketization policies when they are translated into the field. This was operationalised through the use of LCT, and specifically the dimension of Autonomy. The theoretical framework of LCT provides a way of conceiving of the field as having a differentiated internal structure, and reveals the underlying principles of the teachers' practice, allowing their substantively different concerns to be theorized. This framework was enacted in the research through a mixed-methods approach, with policy document analysis and a survey of teachers providing understandings of broader teacher attitudes to reforms, while semi-structured interviews offered the opportunity to teachers to raise their own concerns about marketization and explain their responses to reforms. Three areas of teaching within TAFE were focused on in order to investigate if responses varied based on their position within the field. The three areas, nursing, trades and hospitality, were chosen as they reflect different positions within the field, varying in their length of history as part of VET, educational history of the teachers working within them and whether their associated industries are motivated by economic, or other, concerns. Finally, the chapter outlined the iterative analysis process, as autonomy codes were applied to the substantive data through the use of two translation devices to connect theoretical concepts to empirical data.

8.3   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the policy document analysis and teacher survey, which illustrated the field of vocational education and presented broader conceptions of how the reforms impacted the sector. Chapter 5 through 7 presented the findings from the three case studies, nursing, trades and hospitality, using the interview data to illustrate how these different areas of the field each constructed and reacted to marketization reforms.

8.3.1 Chapter 4 – The VET field in NSW

Chapter 4 provided an outline of the vocational education field in Australia. Bourdieu's Field Theory was incorporated as an organising framework for the chapter providing a structured approach to analysing and presenting the field. It demonstrated how the field has its own distinct values and ways of working that had built up over time, which impacted how policy reforms were incorporated into the sector. The field had shifted over time from being largely dominated by the public provider TAFE in the 1970s, to a more diverse field, with private providers, community organisations, universities and schools all active within the sector. Initially the field was based upon a set of beliefs that conceived of VET from an educational perspective, valuing its ability to serve social justice and increase social mobility. These principles were embedded in the Kangan report which set up the foundations of the sector. An alternative, more economically-focused understanding of VET had since increased in prominence in the sector, which focused on vocational education's ability to serve the needs of the economy. The 2015 *Smart and Skilled* reforms, which were the impetus for the thesis, were embedded with these economic understandings of vocational education. The reforms were shown to have increased a number of tendencies already existing in the field, specifically, increasing its integration with industry, increasing the diversity of the field by encouraging more educational institutions to enter the sector and shifting the values of the sector to focus on the VET's contribution to the economy. Finally, the chapter presented some initial findings on how actors from within the sector, both academic commentariat and teachers in the field, have responded to the reforms. Both groups were largely critical of the reforms, suggesting that in pursuing economic efficiency they had diminished the focus on educational quality in the sector. They understood the current reforms as continuing past trends in the sector, such as increasing the influence of private providers in the sector, and shifting the focus of the public provider to maximising profitability and cutting costs, rather than focusing on students' educational outcomes. These findings represented a broad range of conceptions from across the field, however due to the variegated nature of vocational education, the thesis aimed to examine three teaching areas in VET in more detail, to investigate whether teachers in different areas experienced the reforms in different ways.

8.3.2 Chapter 5 – Nursing education

Nursing education is a relatively recent entrant into the field of vocational education, with courses being run in the sector since the 1980s. The nursing educators within TAFE maintained a strong connection with the practice of nursing, as due to industry regulations all of them worked in health facilities on a regular basis. In having a foot in both social universes, the teachers embodied a position on the border of the vocational education field, reflecting *ancillary* strength *positional autonomy* (PA+). This dual identity appeared to colour their understanding of the values of vocational education. They drew on the nursing ethic of care in their educational work, focusing them on principles such as holistic student care and a scepticism towards economic motives. These values resonate with many of the *core* purposes of vocational education, reflecting them embodying *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +). Bringing this together, while the nursing educators conceived of themselves as at the border of the educational and nursing fields, they embraced a number of the autonomous principles of the field which aligned with their understandings of nursing, resulting in them embodying a position within the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+ +). This orientation is displayed by position 1 in Figure 8.1.
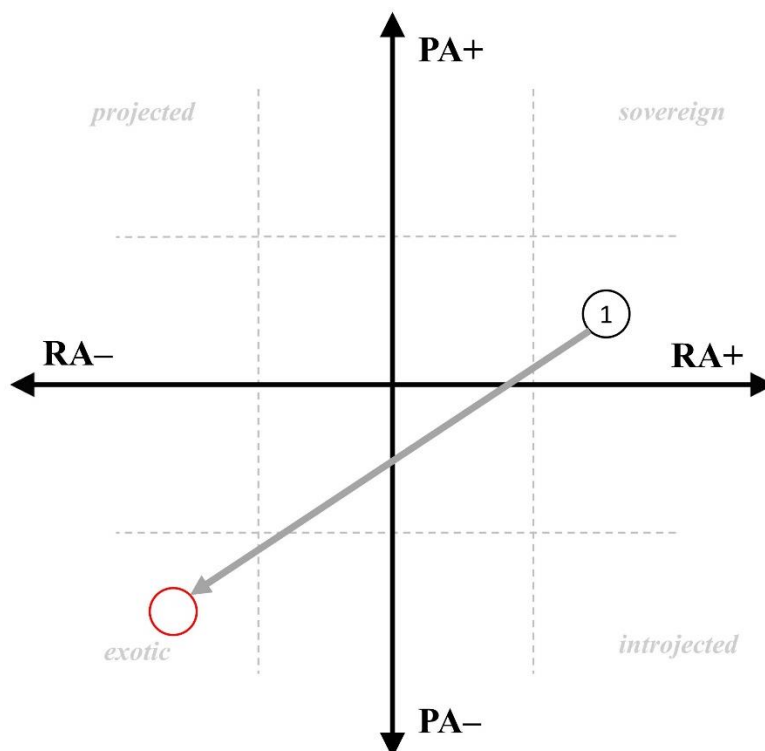

Figure 8.1. Nursing teachers' conception of marketization reforms

The nursing educators described the reforms as originating from the political field and being implemented within VET in a top-down fashion, while also suggesting that the reforms were based on values foreign the vocational education field. This reflects a *weakening positional autonomy* and *weakening relational autonomy*, resulting in the nursing educator's perceptions of reforms embodying a position in the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –), represented by the red circle in Figure 8.1. When reflecting on the effects of reforms, the nursing educators felt they were increasingly being pressured to perform less educational tasks and be more oriented towards goals that were heteronomous with the sector. They described an increasing emphasis on the non-educational aspects of the role, pressuring them to adopt a less educational identity, embodying an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Furthermore, the nursing educators perceived that marketization reforms had resulted in the principles of the sector shifting, as a more economically focused understanding of vocational education was embraced, embodying an *unassociated* purpose reflecting *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). The combination of these resulted in the nursing educators perceiving the reforms as pressuring them to adopt a position within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –); performing a non-educational role, oriented towards non-educational goals. This pressure is represented by the arrow in Figure 8.1. The nursing educators had difficulty accepting these new principles in the sector, resulting in them feeling overworked and undervalued. They had particular issues adapting to the changing principles of the field, as their distinct understandings of the goals of the sector, structured by their dual identity as nurse-educators, clashed with the goals imported by the reforms.

8.3.3   Chapter 6 – Trades education

Trades education has a long history within TAFE, having been a major focus of vocational education since TAFE's inception. In contrast with the nursing educators, the trades teachers understood themselves as long-term occupants of the VET field, who were connected to other fields in only a limited way. This siloed position developed a strong educational identity in the trades educators, embodying a *core* role in the field reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+ +). The trades teachers' long-term occupancy of the field resulted in them being imbued with many of the traditional educational understandings of the sector, and rejecting other conceptions of its worth. In upholding these traditional values, they exemplify a *core* purpose reflecting *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+ +). Bringing together the above, the trades teachers long-term experience within the field and conception of themselves

as bastions of educational values results in them occupying a position deep within the *sovereign code* (PA+ +, RA+ +), represented by position 2 in Figure 8.2.
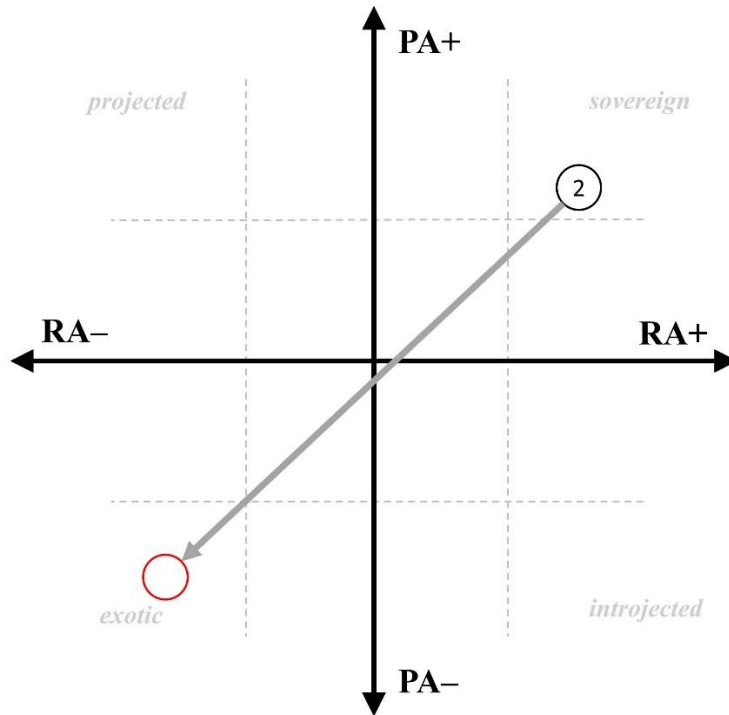
Figure 8.2. Trades teachers' conception of marketization reforms

The trades teachers understood the reforms as being designed and implemented by those outside vocational education and based on a set values divergent to the traditional values of vocational education. The red circle in Figure 8.2 represent the trades teachers' characterisation of the reforms, reflecting a position in the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –). The trades teachers described the reforms as substantially shifting the sector. They described the effects of the reforms as pressuring teachers in the sector to embrace a less-educational identity, by expecting teachers to perform more non-educational tasks, embodying an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Additionally, they described the principles of the field as changing, embracing an economic understanding of the sector which often clashed with the traditional educational values of the field, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose of *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). The combination of these resulted in the trades educators perceiving the reforms as pressuring them to adopt a position within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –); performing a non-educational role, oriented towards non-educational goals. This pressure is depicted by the arrow in Figure 8.2. This shift in the field left the teachers feeling increasingly alienated within their workplace. They described

feeling deprofessionalized and unsatisfied with their work, resulting in significant stress and anger at TAFE. A number of teachers described feeling simply unable and incapable of adapting to these new roles.

8.3.4   Chapter 7 – Hospitality education

Hospitality education is a relatively recent entrant to the field, being offered in vocational education since the late 1980s. It has historically been closely connected with industry, with a number of hotels running their own courses in the sector. The hospitality teachers identified as being closely connected with their industry partners and that this was a central aspect of their educational identity. This positioned them near the boundaries of the VET field embodying an *ancillary* role reflecting *stronger positional autonomy* (PA+). In much the same way as the nursing educators, they drew on the values of their associated industry to structure their understandings of vocational education. However, due to the commercially-oriented values of hospitality, they embraced a values system that could conceive of vocational education from a business perspective. They accepted the legitimacy of profitability and efficiency as goals within the sector, emphasising their place alongside maintaining educational quality and student support, reflecting an *ancillary* purpose of the field that embodies *stronger relational autonomy* (RA+). As such, the hospitality teachers understood themselves as at the border of the vocational education field due to their connections with industry and embraced a more commercially-oriented understanding of educational values, thus occupying a shallow position within the *sovereign code* (PA+, RA+), as depicted by position 3 in Figure 8.3.
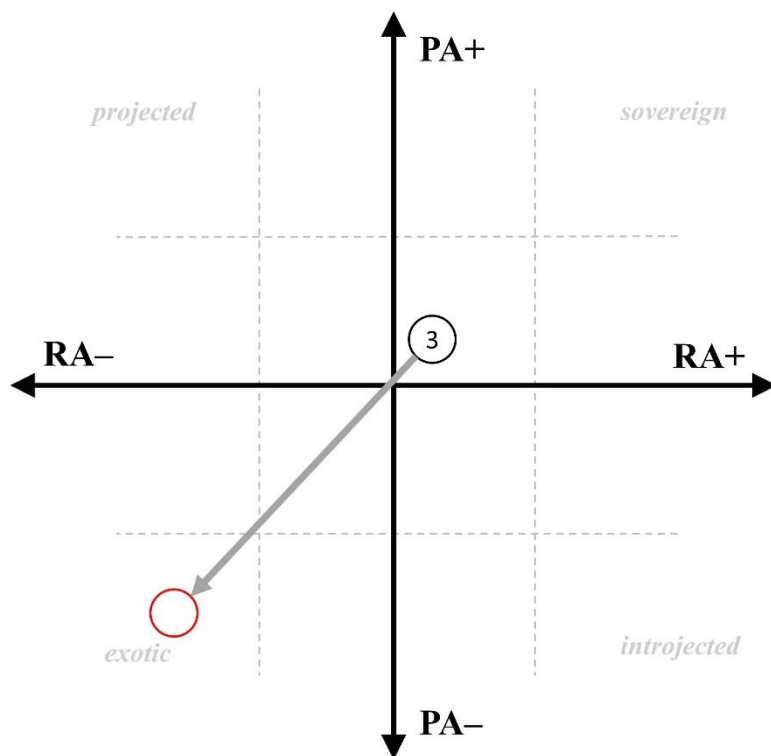
Figure 8.3. Hospitality teachers' conception of marketization reforms

The hospitality teachers characterized the reforms as being instigated by government agents, at a distance from actual educating, and based upon values systems external to education. Bringing these together, the hospitality teachers could be characterised as perceiving of the reforms as originating from deep within the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –), as displayed by the red circle in Figure 8.3. While the hospitality teachers initially positioned themselves near the boundaries of the field, they still described feeling pressure to change their practices in response to the policies. They outlined an increased expectation to perform non-educational roles such as financial costing and marketing, embodying an *unassociated* role reflecting *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– – –). Additionally, they described the principles of the field as changing, embracing an economic understanding of the sector which often clashed with the traditional educational values of the field, reflecting an *unassociated* purpose of *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– – –). Based on this, the teachers felt increasingly pressured to adopt an increasingly non-educational role that was directed towards non-educational goals, embodying a position in the *exotic* code (PA– –, RA– –). This pressure is depicted by the arrow in Figure 8.3. However, the hospitality teachers described being largely willing and able to shift their practice and adapt to the reforms. The hospitality teachers described how their background in the commercial field of hospitality resulted in them having a good

understanding of the logics of business, and a willingness to apply these principles to vocational education.

8.4 INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS TO ADDRESS RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the research questions of the study the above findings need to be integrated. Specifically, to address the third research question – whether teachers' perception of their position in the field is important for shaping their understandings of reforms – it is important to examine the similarities and differences of the three case studies. This comparison will be enabled by considering how each teaching area positioned themselves within the field of VET, how they characterised the reforms themselves and how they experienced and responded to the effects of the reforms.

8.4.1 Teachers' perception of their position in the field

The three teaching areas in the study understood themselves as inhabiting different positions in the VET field, which can be plotted on the autonomy plane. Figure 8.4 displays that while all three groups were coded as occupying positions in the sovereign code, there was substantial variation between their locations within this code. The nursing educators (1 in Figure 8.4) displayed a dual-identity in conceiving of themselves as nurse-educators, while still championing many of the traditional educational values of the field, resulting in them occupying a position near the boundary of the field in terms of *positional autonomy*, with *stronger relational autonomy* (PA+, RA+ +). The trades teachers (2 in Figure 8.4) were more siloed than those in nursing, being solely long-term occupants of the VET field, resulting in them being heavily inculcated with the traditional educational values of the sector, positioning them deep within the *sovereign code* (PA+ +, RA+ +). In contrast to the other teachers in the study the hospitality educators described themselves as closer to the boundaries of the field (3 in Figure 8.4). They shared with the nursing educators a strong connection with their associated industry, and drew on their understandings from working in this industry in a similar way. However, as the hospitality industry is more commercially oriented than the nursing sector, these values gave the hospitality teachers a more utilitarian perspective of the field, legitimizing a more commercially-oriented understanding of education. This resulted in the hospitality teachers embodying a position of weaker relational autonomy than either of the other teaching areas. Through mapping the teachers on the

autonomy plane it appears that the research in this thesis was successful in selecting teaching areas that reflect the diversity of the vocational education field. The following sections will investigate whether the teachers' different perceptions of their location in the field appeared to colour their understanding of, or responses to, the marketization reforms.
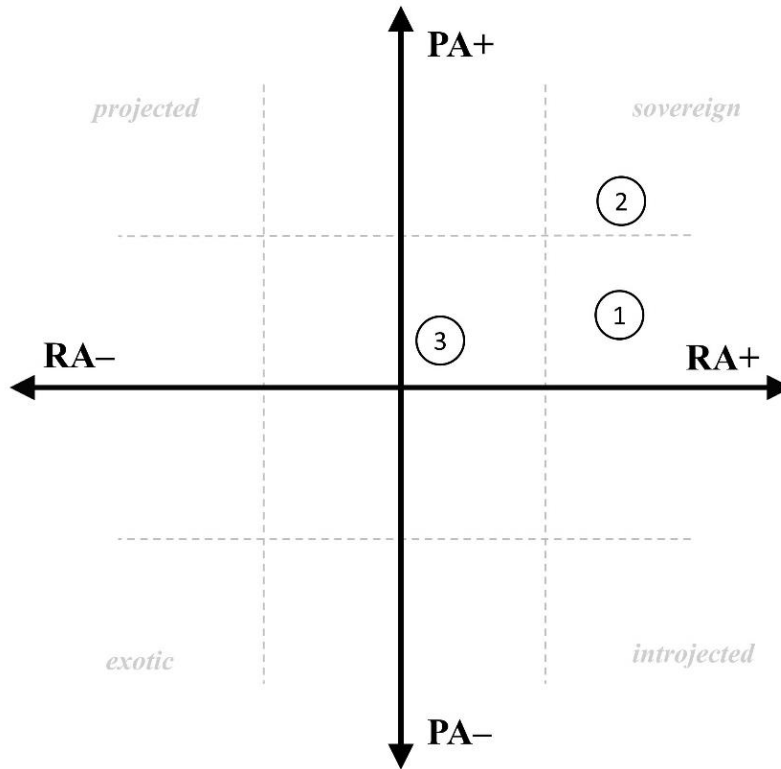
Figure 8.4. Teachers' position in the field (1. Nursing, 2. Trades & 3. Hospitality)

8.4.2   Teachers' perception of reforms

While the three teaching areas perceived themselves as occupying different locations within the field, they shared some common understandings about the marketization reforms. They all described the reforms as originating from outside the field of vocational education and being based on principles heteronomous to the field, as is displayed in Figure 8.5. The nursing and trades teachers emphasised that reforms were instigated by those outside the sector, and implemented by managers within the sector in a top-down fashion with minimal consultation. While the hospitality teachers felt the implementation process was more consultative, they still identified the reforms as alien to the sector. This suggests that regardless of the positioning of the teachers in the field, the fundamental aspects of reforms in terms of their origin and the values they embody, are understood similarly. However, the hospitality teachers discussed the external origins of reforms substantially less that the other teaching areas in the study. This could be due their position on the boundaries of the field, as

the external marketization reforms were less 'foreign' to them, than to the teachers who were more firmly engrained in the VET sector, even if they were understood in a similar manner.
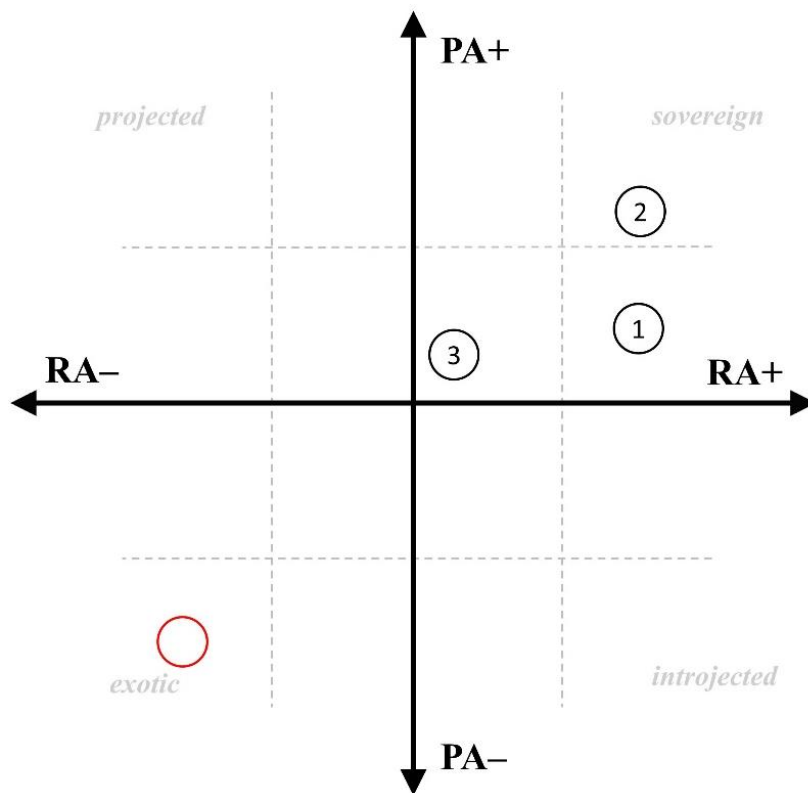
Figure 8.5. Teachers' characterization of reforms (red)

8.4.3 Teachers' perceptions of the pressures of reform

All three of the teaching sections described the reforms as pressuring them to adopt less educationally-focused roles in the field and base their practice on less educationally-oriented principles. This is depicted in Figure 8.6. The teaching groups focused on different aspects of these shifts. The nursing teachers highlighted the pressure to engage in more marketing for courses, the trades teachers placed more emphasis on the shift towards compliance activities, while the hospitality teachers pinpointed pressures to engage more with industry partners. While these pressures on their identity were substantively different issues, they were underpinned by a common concern about the increasing pressure to perform non-educational activities, and having these activities become a more emphasised part of their role. They described worries about their role becoming increasingly non-educational: *weaker positional autonomy* (PA– –). Similarly, the three teaching sections felt the values and principles of the sector changing. While each section focused on different aspects of these values, they brought up common themes in the way TAFE's principles were changing, such as more focus

on compliance, adopting an increasingly economic perspective of education, providing less support for students and prioritizing the needs of industry. Both the nursing and trades teachers emphasised that these new goals were regularly incompatible with the traditional educational understandings of the sector, placing teachers in a difficult position as they attempted to attain these mutually exclusive goals. The hospitality teachers did not perceive the goals as mutually incompatible, instead framing them as new goals to the sector that dovetailed with their educational principles. In sum, all three groups understood the values of the field shifting to emphasise commercially-oriented principles in the sector: *weaker relational autonomy* (RA– –). Thus, the teachers felt a pressure to adopt a position in the *exotic code* (PA– –, RA– –); increasingly performing a role that is non-educational while working towards non-educational goals.
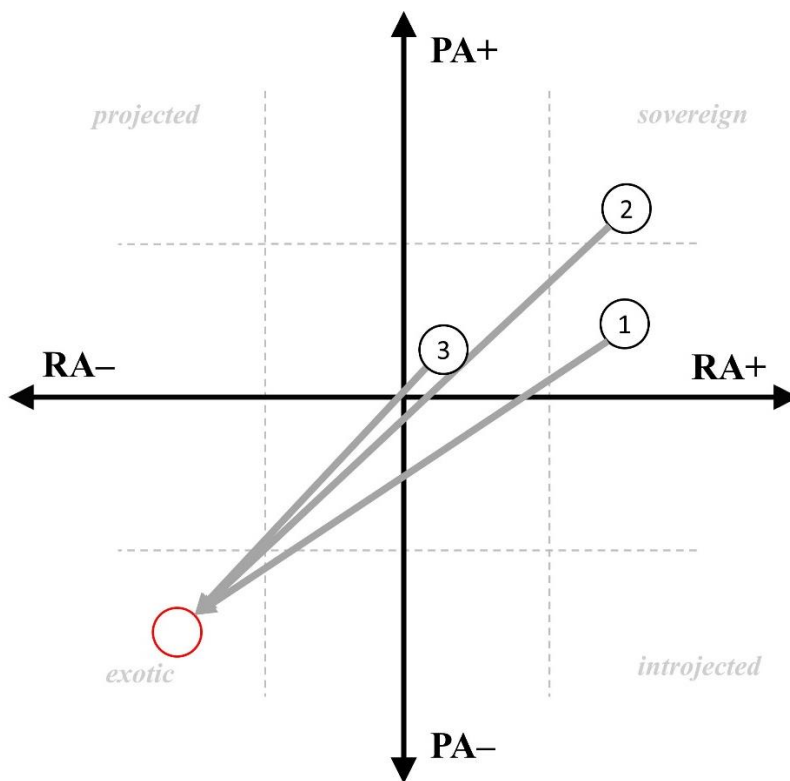
Figure 8.6. Pressure felt by different teaching sections (1. Nursing , 2. Trades & 3. Hospitality)

While the three teaching groups all felt a similar type of pressure, the major difference between these groups was how they perceived the effects of these changes. Compared to the other two groups in the study the hospitality teachers' position towards the edge of the field meant they were required to 'code shift' less than the other teachers under investigation. This helps to explain how they felt more able to embrace some aspects of the reforms and accept their legitimacy within vocational education. While they had reservations about some facets

of the changes, they largely understood the logics behind them and felt they were valid in the sector – stating that none of the hospitality teachers were angry at TAFE for the reforms (see Chapter 7.4.3). This stands in contrast to the reactions to the changes from other teaching sections, who conceived of them as epochal shifts in TAFE and were unwilling to embrace values they saw as in opposition to those they had traditionally held, characterising the changes as 'bullshit' (Chapter 6.4.2), and 'problematic' (Chapter 5.4.3). These groups would also highlight the costs of the reforms on teachers, using highly emotive language in describing the stress and frustration caused by the changes (see Chapter 5.4.2 and Chapter 6.4.1).

The teachers' attitudes towards reforms appeared to reflect their belief in their ability to adapt to them. The trades and nursing teachers described being asked to do tasks they were unfamiliar with and unskilled for, such as marketing and course costing (see sections 5.4.1 and 6.4.1). They emphasised that they had substantial difficulty adapting to these new expectations, resulting in dissatisfaction with their work, increasingly feeling deprofessionalized, in addition to substantial stress and anger with the direction of the sector. In contrast, the hospitality teachers understood themselves as well equipped for these tasks and willing to take on these new roles. Moreover, the hospitality teachers were aware of this difference between them and other teaching areas describing themselves as outliers for actively striving to, and enjoying, change (see Chapter 7.4.2). The three teaching areas in the study additionally suggested that marketization reforms had altered how TAFE valued its teaching staff. As their role became increasingly non-educational in its focus, classroom teaching became less valued, while other non-educational skills began to be valorised within TAFE. This lead to teachers in the different areas experiencing the changes differently, as some of the trades teachers who lacked business savvy or marketing skills were regarded as 'recalcitrant' (Chapter 6.4.2) while hospitality teachers who possessed these qualities felt 'very valued and highly recognised' (Chapter 7.4.2) within TAFE. This perception of TAFE's evaluation criteria of teachers shifting over time was reflected by the survey respondents (Chapter 4.4.3).

Returning to the third research question – whether teachers in different locations in the field experience reforms differently. The findings from this study suggest that teachers' perception of their location in the field is an important factor in shaping how they perceive and respond to reforms. For both the nursing and hospitality teachers, their understanding of themselves as

at the edge of the field, and deep connection with their associated industries, resulted in them adopting a dual professional identity. This dual-identity was fundamental to how they perceived and judged changes to the sector; both groups drew on their experiences from their associated industries in order to interpret and evaluate reforms. While this resulted in these groups evaluating the reforms in deeply different ways, it emphasises the importance of teachers' connection with other fields. This finding is particularly resonant in the vocational education sector, as due to it necessarily being a 'second career path', many teachers within it possess this dual identity.

While the trades teachers did not display as apparent 'dual identity', their responses also support this finding. Their perception of their position within the field still appeared important to how they understood reforms. In understanding themselves as deep within the field, they did not have a second component of a 'dual identity' to draw upon to colour their understanding of reforms, instead they perceived themselves solely through a vocational education lens. Their long-term standing in the field resulted in them being deeply embedded with the traditional values of the sector, which became their framework for how they conceived of reforms. This suggests that their perception of their position within the field, whether at the boundaries of the field or within its core, is important for how teachers conceive and react to reforms.

In conclusion, the teachers' perception of their position in the field in terms of autonomy codes can help in understanding their responses to marketization reforms in the sector. While they may work in substantively different areas within vocational education, and their complaints about reforms may focus on different aspects, the coding underlying their perception of themselves in the field provides guidance in terms of how easily they will adapt to changes. Those teachers who had a closer 'code match' with the reforms felt more able to alter their practices to align with the policies, whereas those with a 'code clash' struggled to do so, finding the process stressful and deprofessionalising. This suggests that an important factor for adaptation to reforms, is the 'distance' that different teachers have to travel across the autonomy plane in order to align with the logics of the new reforms. Within this, LCT has helped in providing a tool to examine these principles underlying teachers' practice and translate between what appear to be empirically very different teaching sections.

8.5 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

The findings included in this thesis contribute to two main areas of existing knowledge. First, they contribute substantive knowledge to the fields of vocational education, education policy reform and teacher identity research. Second, the findings contribute to the theoretical developments in the field of vocational education, while also contributing to the developing educational research field of LCT.

8.5.1 Substantive contributions to vocational education literature

The thesis made substantive contributions to a number of gaps in the research identified in the literature review, as well as contributing additional nuances to already well-developed areas of research. These findings include further characterizing the nature of the VET field, providing space for teachers' voice in the literature, exploring the lived experience of 'performativity' in teaching, emphasising the importance of VET teachers' identity and contributing knowledge applicable to the policy creation process.

The thesis contributed to the characterization of the field of vocational education within the literature. In Chapter 4 both the document analysis and teacher survey indicated that the field was increasingly being impacted by ideas from beyond the field of vocational education. The teachers across all three case studies displayed a clear conception that reforms were not instigated by those within the field, in line with its values, but rather imposed upon the field by those external to the sector. This adds support to the frequent conception in the literature that the vocational education field lacks autonomy, with its actions and practices increasingly directed by agents from beyond the field (see Chapter 1.2). This study adds nuance to this claim in demonstrating that educators in the sector perceive the low-status, and lower level of autonomy, of the field as a whole. Furthermore, findings in this thesis added further support to the notion that the diversity of vocational education is one of the distinguishing features of the field (Chapter 4.4.2). This study reflects this claim in demonstrating the diversity of the field through the three case studies, but additionally emphasises that this diversity is an important feature of the field in structuring how changes to the sector are responded to in variable ways. An implication of this for future studies is that when conducting research on vocational education teachers it is important to incorporate the views of a diverse sample of teachers in order to accurately represent the views of the field, rather than treating teachers in the field as a homogenous group.

One of the primary concerns within the vocational education literature that included the perspectives of teachers was the importance of providing space for teachers' voice to have legitimacy in the domain of policy evaluation (Chapter 2.3.1). Throughout the project the perspectives of the teachers have been foregrounded, allowing them to provide unique insights as to the in-classroom impacts of reforms. The diversity of teachers involved in the study has resulted in highlighting how reforms have been incorporated into different areas of the sector in different ways, for example the nursing educators being more accepting of increased compliance requirements due to their familiarity with them from professional nursing. These provided a range of contributions to how different areas respond to reforms in different ways, while also indicating that across a field as diverse as vocational education there is likely a further diversity of responses, providing a direction for future research.

The study also contributed to the field of research focusing on teacher performativity within managerialist cultures. The previous research within the field demonstrated that performance management strategies had decreased the autonomy of teachers in the section, and increased the amount of time spent on 'performativity': demonstrating that their teaching practices were compliant with stated guidelines (Chapter 2.3.1). This shift has been described as the 'proletarianization' of the teachers, in breaking down their work into distinct components, effectively diminishing their professionalism. The teachers in the current study largely reflected these concerns in regularly describing the burden of increased administration involved in demonstrating 'compliance' in their teaching. While no teachers described it as a positive experience, the nursing and hospitality educators both acknowledged the necessity of this auditing. The trades teachers reflected a number of the concerns from the literature, in finding these changes highly problematic, interpreting the focus on auditing as undermining their abilities and indicating management's mistrust of them (Chapter 6.4.1). This diversity in responses to managerialism suggests that that it is too simplistic to construct teachers as in a simply antagonistic relationship with managers, as defenders of values against reforms. The lived reality in the sector is more complex than this, with various areas interacting with reforms in substantively different ways. This warns against the oversimplification of the relationship between managers and teachers, with substantial diversity of how this relationship is understood in the field.

The thesis also spoke specifically to one of the ideas raised within this literature in terms of Australian VET teachers' resistance to managerialist reform. Martin (2012) described TAFE teachers as adopting an unofficial policy of simply not implementing reforms that went against their ethos. Their ability to do so was attributed to the traditionally high levels of autonomy of TAFE teachers had over their classroom practice. The current study produced minimal evidence of this occurring in response to the 2015 marketization reforms. While one teacher from the trades section did describe processes of resistance (section 6.4.2), this was not a common sentiment among the other teachers. A number of teachers did suggest that these changes were more substantial than past changes to the sector, which had altered the discourse in the sector rather than its practices. This suggests that the 2015 reforms altered the underlying principles of the field to such an extent that teachers had minimal autonomy in mitigating their impacts.

This research also contributed to research focused on how VET teachers construct their identity and how this identity effects their understandings of education. While there is a substantial body of literature on the impact of reform on teachers and on the 'dual-professionalism' of teachers (see Chapter 2.4), this is the first study which has suggested that this dual-professionalism is important for how teachers interpret policy changes. Those teachers with a close connection to their associated industry were demonstrated to draw on understandings from their industry to interpret reforms. This suggests that this dual-identity may not simply be an important feature of the teachers within the sector, but a key facet of the field as a whole, effecting how changes incorporated within the sector. Furthermore, several teachers in the study has worked within TAFE for over ten years, but still remained strongly connected with their associated industry, emphasising the durability of this dual-identity. This suggests that in future studies of teachers under reform, the dual identity of the teachers is an important dimension to consider.

The findings in this thesis make a number of contributions to knowledge around policy-making in vocational education. First, that universally applied reforms, such as *Smart and Skilled*, are problematic when applied to a field as diverse as vocational education. The outcomes of such reforms will be uneven, as different areas of the sector will respond and incorporate them in different ways. This emphasises the importance of, where possible, tailoring reforms to local contexts. Second, this study provides evidence for why different areas of the field respond differently to reforms. Incorporating these understandings into

policy design, could mean that even when universal reforms to a sector are necessary, there is direction for which areas of the field to target consultation. Alternatively, reforms may be framed differently to align with the principles of these different areas. Furthermore, it provides guidance to which areas of the field are likely to flourish under reforms, which may be able to provide best-practice models for other areas of the field.

While this finding is particularly prominent for the field of vocational education policy, it has implications for other sectors as well. Substantial fields of society, from health to schools, and from disability services to social welfare, have undergone wide-ranging reforms based on neoliberal understandings, and the findings from this study could provide guidance as to how different areas of these fields respond and conceive of these types of reforms. Most directly, as neoliberal reforms are increasingly a staple of higher education, these findings may offer particular insights for the tertiary sector.

8.5.2   Theoretical contributions to vocational education literature

The literature review identified the need for a theoretical framework that could study the 'meso' level of the field; treating the VET field as a distinct object with its own ways of working. The research in this thesis utilised Bourdieu's field theory as an organising framework in order to address this need. Field theory afforded a way of seeing the vocational education field as a distinct object of study with its own principles and ways of working. These specific attributes of vocational education mean that external forces, such as marketization policies, are not simply reflected within the field, but rather refracted by these ways of working into unintended, field-specific outcomes. This theoretical conception allowed the research to trace the process of policy enactment from policy documents into teachers' actual practice, while factoring in the 'refraction coefficient' of the VET field. Using this organising framework provides an approach of having a theoretically informed study which still incorporates empirical evidence of the impacts of policy reform, avoiding the problem addressed in the literature review of studies simply 'reading off' the impacts of policies on teachers. The adoption of this approach would be helpful for building cumulative knowledge in the field, by allowing more direct comparison between policy case studies.

A second need identified within the literature review was for a way of perceiving the field of vocational education as internally differentiated. The LCT concepts of *autonomy codes* afford

this. Within the current study *positional autonomy* described the degree to which actors or institutions understood themselves as part of the field of VET, while *relational autonomy* identified the degree to which actors or practices were oriented towards the specific goals of vocational education. Mapping these two concepts together as axis on the *autonomy plane* allows a way of conceptualising the range of different positions within the field that actors can occupy. This provides a way of conceptualising the internal diversity of the field, through coding the different positions of various teachers, institutions and policy documents. Doing so provides a relational understanding of the topography of the field. This way of conceptualising provides insight into how an external force, such as a policy, may impact different areas of the field in different ways.

A final need identified in the literature review was for a theoretical framework that could conceptually connect the substantively different concerns of the different teaching areas by revealing the principles under these concerns. Autonomy codes additionally served this function. Through coding teachers concerns about marketization reforms in order to reveal the principles underlying them, in this case their positional autonomy and relational autonomy, LCT offers a way of theoretically conceptualising these substantively different practices. This allowed the research to still provide space for teachers to raise their specific concerns about reforms, while integrating these into a theoretical framework to better enable knowledge building about the policy enactment process.

The research in this thesis also contributed to the theoretical development of LCT, particularly through its implementation of the recently re-developed dimension of Autonomy. As this group of concepts was only formalised in its current state in 2018 (Maton & Howard, 2018), there are a limited range of studies that have applied them. The bulk of work using these concepts so far have utilised them to study classroom practice (examples in Chapter 3.3). The current study extends this approach to examining and coding education policy, rather than classroom pedagogy. Furthermore, it demonstrates the potential to analyse whole social fields using autonomy codes, particularly applicable for those undergoing social change. While an earlier conceptual version of autonomy codes have been applied to a study of British higher education (Maton, 2005), demonstrating their applicability in other contexts provides further evidence of the generalizability of the tools. The process of incorporating these concepts into a new arena through the development of two translation devices was

outlined extensively in Chapter 3.7.2. This provides further insight into how to enact autonomy codes into different research settings.

8.6   POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are three principal limitations of the study for addressing the research questions. First, the limited sample sizes involved in the study limits its generalizability. The restricted sample size of teachers in the survey component, constrained the study from generating understandings that could be confidently generalised to a wider range of teachers. Ultimately, this limited sample size resulted in the data being used only in a descriptive capacity, rather than testing for statistical significance. However, the survey instrument was designed for this purpose, with the open-ended questions oriented towards this type of data. There were also limitations in regards to the representativeness of the sample in the interviews, due to potential sources of bias. There are two main potential reasons for this. First, as the invitation to be part of the research was sent from TAFE management to the teachers, they could have the perception that TAFE management is involved in conducting the research, thus motivating those critical of TAFE's direction to not participate, fearing potential career ramifications. To mitigate this, throughout the interview process participants were reassured about the confidentiality of the study and their anonymity within it. Second, and in contrast, the nature of the research project, investigating teachers' opinions of a highly contentious reform, may have attracted those with particularly strong opinions about the issues involved. While the study may have limited generalisability, it provides a firm foundation for future research to investigate teachers' perspectives further. A wider range of qualitative interviews, in addition to larger scale, quantitative approaches would be valuable to explore whether a number of findings from this research hold for a larger group of TAFE teachers.

A second limitation for addressing the research questions was the restricted range of areas in the field it focused on. In providing a deep analysis of only three areas within vocational education it does not provide insight into how all areas of the sector would respond to reforms. The three areas were selected due to their differences, in an attempt to represent some of the diversity of the field. As they reflect different positions within the field, other areas with similar positions may interpret reforms in similar ways. As such, while the results cannot be generalized to the larger VET field as a whole, they may resonate with or reflect the responses of other similar areas within VET. Similarly, this study was limited in only

including teachers from metropolitan regions, specifically only teachers from NSW, Australia. In order to mitigate this limitation of only examining specific areas of the wider field, future research could build on this by performing comparative studies in other research contexts, which would be valuable in investigating if the findings from this thesis are echoed elsewhere.

Finally, the literature review identified the complexity of the policy reform process as one of the major reasons to avoid simply 'reading off' the impacts of policy reforms. In attempting to investigate the complexity of the process the study was limited by the methods enacted. In relying on teacher accounts of changes, we gain insight into their experiences and understandings of reforms, which may not accurately reflect how reforms were actually enacted into the field. One of the weaknesses of interviews and surveys is for participants to engage in what Bourdieu (1977, p. 18) described as 'outsider-oriented discourses' that leave many of the realities of their experiences unsaid, creating incomplete accounts. In order to gain more insight 'inside' the process of marketization reforms being enacted, future studies could adopt a variety of additional methods, such as using more ethnographic approaches, video analysis of classroom data, participant observation methods or including a longitudinal component within the study to timeline the policy enactment process. These methods would provide additional insights into the process of policy enactments, in tracing this process from policy documents to classroom implementation. Furthermore, examining the perspectives of other actors in the sector, such as managers and students, could provide a wider range of insights into how reforms effect curriculum, pedagogy and practice. This future research would build upon the current study to explore whether teachers' interpretations of reforms reflected how they played out in classrooms.

8.7   CONCLUSION

Vocational education teachers in Australia are an increasingly disempowered group. They work in a field that is regularly described as low-status and lacking autonomy. Even within this low-status field, their influence is diminishing, with minimal contribution to the trajectory of the field or control over their own work. These teachers, many of whom have a long history within TAFE and a strong belief in the ethos of public education, are increasingly feeling alienated in the field they work, as neoliberal reforms have shifted the values and ways of working of the sector. These economic values, having gained a foothold

in the educational field, give little indication of receding in the future. More than any other educational sector, vocational education services disadvantaged communities and has historically played an essential role in providing opportunities for social mobility and making Australia a more egalitarian society. The process of how these teachers make sense of these new ways of working in the sector is important, as these TAFE teachers have long played a part in the emancipatory work of vocational education. For many of these teachers their response to neoliberal reforms has been to work harder, shielding their students from the negative impacts and safeguarding the quality of education they offer. As such, this thesis had an obligation to express and represent the experiences of these teachers as they attempt to uphold the ethos of public education while they feel the ground of vocational education shifting underneath them. Hopefully, in not only giving voice to these teachers, but also explaining what they are feeling, the current research provides more respect and currency for this group in the wider vocational education sector.

REFERENCES

ABC News. (2017). Acquire Learning: Vocational education broker fined $4.5m after targeting vulnerable students. Retrieved from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-30/acquire-learning-federal-court-fined-4.5-million/8571494

Aiken, L. H., Clarke, S. P., Sloane, D. M., Sochalski, J., & Silber, J. H. (2002). Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout, and Job Dissatisfaction. *JAMA, 288*(16), 1987-1993. doi:10.1001/jama.288.16.1987

Ainley, P. (2013). Education and the reconstitution of social class in England. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 18*(1-2), 46-60. doi:10.1080/13596748.2013.755814

Alexiadou, N. (2001). Management Identities in Transition: A Case Study from Further Education. *The Sociological Review, 49*(3), 412-435. doi:10.1111/1467-954X.00339

Allais, S. (2012). Will skills save us? Rethinking the relationships between vocational education, skills development policies, and social policy in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development, 32*(5), 632-642. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.01.001

Allen Consulting Group. (1994). *Successful reform: Competitive skills for Australia and Australian enterprise*. Retrieved from Melbourne:

Anderson, D. (1996). *Reading the market: A review of literature on the vocational education and training market in Australia*. Retrieved from Melbourne:

Anderson, D. (1999). Vocational education reform and students: redressing silences and omissions. *Australian Educational Researcher, 26*(2), 99-125. doi:10.1007/BF03219698

Anderson, D. (2006a). Globalisation, training packages and private providers: emerging tensions in national VET policy. *AVETRA*, 1-14.

Anderson, D. (2006b). *Trading places: the impact and outcomes of market reform in vocational education and training*. Retrieved from Adelaide: https://au-east.erc.monash.edu.au/fpfiles/7642447/monash_130769.pdf

Apple, M., & Beane, J. A. (2007). *Democratic schools: Lessons in powerful education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Arbaugh, J. B., Fornaciari, C. J., & Hwang, A. (2016). Identifying research topic development in business and management education research using Legitimation Code Theory *Journal of Management Education, 40*(6), 654-691. doi:10.1177/1052562916631109

Arbee, A., Hugo, W., & Thomson, C. (2014). Epistemological access in Marketinga demonstration of the use of Legitimation Code Theory in higher education *Journal of Education, 59*, 39-63.

Atkins, L., & Tummons, J. (2017). Professionalism in vocational education: international perspectives. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 22*(3), 355-369. doi:10.1080/13596748.2017.1358517

Australian Government. (2019). Job Outlook: Vocational education teacher. Retrieved from https://joboutlook.gov.au/occupation.aspx?code=2422

Avis, J. (1999). Shifting identity: new conditions and the transformation of practice - teaching within post-compulsory education. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 51*(2), 245-264. doi:10.1080/13636829900200081

Avis, J. (2002). Imaginary Friends: Managerialism, globalisation and post-compulsory education and training in England. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 23*(1), 75-90. doi:10.1080/01596300220123051

Avis, J. (2005). Beyond performativity: reflections on activist professionalism and the labour process in further education. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(2), 222;209;-222. doi:10.1080/0268093052000341403

Avis, J. (2007). Post-compulsory education and training: transformism and the struggle for change. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 17*(3), 195-209. doi:10.1080/09620210701543874

Avis, J., & Atkins, L. (2017). Youth transitions, VET and the 'making' of class: changing theorisations for changing times? *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 22*(2), 165-185. doi:10.1080/13596748.2017.1314678

Avis, J., Bathmaker, A.-M., & Parsons, J. (2002). 'I think a Lot of Staff are Dinosaurs': Further education trainee teachers' understandings of pedagogic relations. *Journal of Education and Work, 15*(2), 181-200. doi:10.1080/13639080220137834

Bachelard, M., Cook, H., & Knott, M. (2015, 17 September). Vocational education, the biggest get-rich quick scheme in Australia. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from https://www.smh.com.au/national/vocational-education-the-biggest-getrich-quick-scheme-in-australia-20150916-gjnqwe.html

Bailly, F. (2012). Vocational training and the demands of work: A convention-based analysis. *Economics & Sociology, 5*(1), 11.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215-228. doi:10.1080/0268093022000043065

Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., & Braun, A. (2012). *How schools do policy: Policy enactment schools*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Barnett, M. (2006). Vocational knowledge and Vocational Pedagogy. In M. Young & J. Gamble (Eds.), *Knowledge, qualifications and curriculum for South African Further Education* (pp. 145-157). Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Barrows, C. W., & Bosselman, R. H. (1999). *Hospitality management education*. New York: Haworth Hospitality Press.

Bartlett, L., Frederick, M., Gulbrandsen, T., & Murillo, E. (2002). The Marketization of Education: Public Schools for Private Ends. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 33*(1), 5-29. doi:10.1525/aeq.2002.33.1.5

Bathmaker, A.-M. (2017). Post-secondary education and training, new vocational and hybrid pathways and questions of equity, inequality and social mobility: introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 69*(1), 1. doi:10.1080/13636820.2017.1304680

Baume, G. J. R. (1999). *Tourism and Hospitality management education in Australia: Development of a conceptual framework and model for the 21st century.* (Doctor of Philosophy), The University of Adelaide,

Baxter, J., & Eyles, J. (1997). Evaluating Qualitative Research in Social Geography: Establishing 'Rigour' in Interview Analysis. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 22*(4), 505-525. doi:10.1111/j.0020-2754.1997.00505.x

Benner, P. E. (1989). *The primacy of caring : stress and coping in health and illness*. Menlo Park, Calif: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity : theory, research, critique* (Rev. ed. ed.). Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Billett, S. (2011). *Vocational Education : Purposes, Traditions and Prospects*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Billett, S. (2014). The standing of vocational education: sources of its societal esteem and implications for its enactment. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 66*(1), 1-21. doi:10.1080/13636820.2013.867525

Black, S., & Bee, B. (2018). Adult literacy and liberal-progressive pedagogy: Australian contexts. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 23*(2), 181-201. doi:10.1080/13596748.2018.1444379

Black, S., & Reich, A. (2010). The elephant in the room: audit culture and TAFE teachers. *AVETRA 13th Annual Conference*, 10.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education : an introduction to theory and methods* (4th ed. ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bolton, R. (2018, October 28). Training compliance rates in VET sector hardly budge in five years. *Financial Review*. Retrieved from https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/training-compliance-rates-in-vet-sector-hardly-budge-in-five-years-20181024-h1728q

Boston Consulting Group. (2016). *The NSW Vocational Education and Training Market and TAFE NSW's competitive position within it*. Retrieved from Sydney:

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1993a). *The Field of Cultural Production*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bourdieu, P. (1993b). *The field of cultural production : essays on art and literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state nobility : elite schools in the field of power*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Bowen, G. A. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: a research note. *Qualitative Research, 8*(1), 137-152. doi:10.1177/1468794107085301

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27-40. doi:10.3316/QRJ0902027

Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H., & Scales, B. (2008). Review of Australian higher education: final report [Bradley review]. In. Canberra: DEEWR.

Brandt, B. L., Farmer, J. A., & Buckmaster, A. (1993). Cognitive apprenticeship approach to helping adults learn. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 1993*(59), 69-78. doi:10.1002/ace.36719935909

Brennan, D. (2002). Australia: Child care and state-centred feminism in a liberal welfare regime. In S. Michel & R. Mahon (Eds.), *Child care policy at the crossroads: Gender and welfare state restrucuring*. New York: Routledge.

Cahill, D., & Konings, M. (2017). *Neoliberalism*. Newark, UNITED KINGDOM: Polity Press.

Campbell, C. (2009). *School choice : how parents negotiate the new school market in Australia*. Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin.

Carpenter, C. (2008). *Qualitative research for occupational and physical therapists: a practical guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

Castells, M. (2010). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Chappell, C. (1999a). Issues of teacher identity in a restructuring VET system. *UTS research centre vocational education & training: working paper 99-42*.

Chappell, C. (1999b). *The policies and discourses of vocational education and training; and their impact on the formation of teacher identities.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Technology Sydney, unpublished PhD thesis.

Chappell, C. (2001). Issues of teacher identity in a restructuring Australian vocational education and training (VET) system. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research, 9*(1), 21-39.

Chen, S. Y., Chang, H. C., & Pai, H. C. (2018). Caring behaviours directly and indirectly affect nursing students' critical thinking. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, 32*(1), 197-203. doi:10.1111/scs.12447

Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous research methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.

Clark, J. (2003). To Hell in a Handcart: Educational realities, teachers' work and neo-liberal restructuting in NSW TAFE. *PhD - Sydney University*.

Clinton, M., & Hazelton, M. (2000). Scoping practice issues in the Australian mental health nursing workforce. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing, 9*(3), 100-109. doi:10.1046/j.1440-0979.2000.00170.x

Coffield, F., Edward, S., Finlay, I., Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., & Gregson, M. (2007). How policy impacts on practice and how practice does not impact on policy. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(5), 723-741. doi:10.1080/01411920701582363

Cohen, L. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed. ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Colley, H., James, D., Diment, K., & Tedder, M. (2003). Learning as becoming in vocational education and training: class, gender and the role of vocational habitus. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 55*(4), 471-498. doi:10.1080/13636820300200240

Conford, I. R. (1997). Competency-based training: An analysis of its strengths and weaknesses by NSW vocational teachers. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research, 2*(2), 64-87.

Connell, R. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: an essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education, 54*(2), 99-112. doi:10.1080/17508487.2013.776990

Connell, R. (2014). Understanding neoliberalism. In S. Braedley & M. Luxton (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life* (pp. 22-36). Montreal, US: MQUP.

Connell, W. F. (1980). *A History of Education in the Twentieth Century World*. Canberra: Curriculum Development Centre.

Corbel, C. P. (2016). *Keywords and key phrases in vocational education policy in Australia: a lexical semantic analysis of knowledge and skills.* (PhD), The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Craig-Smith, S. J., Davidson, M., & French, C. N. (1994). *Hospitality and tourism education in Australia: Challenges and opportunities.* Paper presented at the CAUTHE 1994: Tourism Research and Education in Australia: Proceeding of the Australian National Tourism Research and Education Conferences, Canberra, ACT.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design : choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.

Currie, J., & Vidovich, L. (2000). Privatization and competition policies for Australian universities. *International Journal of Educational Development, 20*(2), 135-151. doi:10.1016/S0738-0593(99)00065-6

Dawkins, J., & Holding, A. (1987). Skills for Australia. In. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Department of Family & Community Services. (2013). *Women in trades: The missing 48 percent*. Retrieved from NSW: https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/268010/3000_WNSW-OccasionalPaper_document_ART.pdf

Department of Labour and National Service. (1970). *The Training of Skilled Workers in Europe: Summary of Report of the Australian Tripartite Mission, 1968-1969*. Retrieved from https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A40561

Dodd, T. (2016, October 5). It's no surprise the VET FEE-HELP scheme was rorted. *Financial Review*.

Dong, A., Maton, K., & Carvalho, L. (2014). The structuring of design knowledge. In P. Rodgers & J. Yee (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Design Research*. London: Routledge.

Doughney, L. (2000). Universal Tertiary Education: How dual-sector universities can challenge the binary divide between TAFE and higher education - the case of Victoria University of Technology. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 22*(1), 59-72. doi:10.1080/713678136

Drummond, J. (2003). Care of the Self in a Knowledge Economy: Higher education, vocation and the ethics of Michel Foucault. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 35*(1), 57-69. doi:10.1111/1469-5812.00005

Esmond, B., & Wood, H. (2017). More morphostasis than morphogenesis? The 'dual professionalism' of English Further Education workshop tutors. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 69*(2), 229-245. doi:10.1080/13636820.2017.1309568

Fagin, C. M. (2001). *When care becomes a burden: Diminishing access to adequate nursing*. New York, NY: Millbank Memorial Fund.

Feather, D. (2015). An alternative proposition to Lewis' views on the 'Constructions of professional identity in a dynamic higher education sector'. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 20*(3), 324-343. doi:10.1080/13596748.2015.1063300

Fejes, A., & Köpsén, S. (2012). Vocational teachers' identity formation through boundary crossing. *Journal of Education and Work, 27*(3), 265-283. doi:10.1080/13639080.2012.742181

Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist Realism is There No Real Alternative*. Ropley: O Books Publishers.

Flick, U. (2014). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Floden, R. E., & Huberman, M. (1989). Teachers' professional lives: The state of the art. *International Journal of Educational Research, 13*(4), 455-466. doi:10.1016/0883-0355(89)90040-2

Foley, A. (2011). VET Manager identities: Culture, philosophy and professional practice. *International Journal of Training Research, 9*(3), 185-203. doi:10.5172/ijtr.9.3.185

Gastmans, C. (2002). A Fundamental Ethical Approach to Nursing: some proposals for ethics education. *Nursing Ethics, 9*(5), 494-507. doi:10.1191/0969733002ne539oa

Gleeson, D., Davies, J., & Wheeler, E. (2005). On the making and taking of professionalism in the further education workplace. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 26*(4), 445-460. doi:10.1080/01425690500199818

Gleeson, D., Hughes, J., O'Leary, M., & Smith, R. (2015). The state of professional practice and policy in the English further education system: a view from below. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 20*(1), 78-95. doi:10.1080/13596748.2015.993877

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers : an introduction* (3rd ed. ed.). Boston, Mass: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Goh, A. Y. S. (2014). Insights from a Bourdieusian lens: The relationship between college-based and workplace learning in becoming a vocational-technical education teacher in Brunei. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 26*(1), 22-38.

Goodson, I. (1992). *Studying Teachers' Lives*. London: Routledge.

Goozee, G. (2001). *The development of TAFE in Australia* (3rd ed.). South Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Grattan, M. (2016, October 5). New VET loan scheme to exclude shonky providers. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/new-vet-loan-scheme-to-exclude-shonky-providers-66507

Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry* (1st ed. ed.). San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.

Grenfell, M., & James, D. (2004). Change in the field—changing the field: Bourdieu and the methodological practice of educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 25*(4), 507-523. doi:10.1080/014256904200026989

Grollmann, P. (2008). The Quality of Vocational Teachers: Teacher Education, Institutional Roles and Professional Reality. *European Educational Research Journal, 7*(4), 535-547. doi:10.2304/eerj.2008.7.4.535

Guthrie, H. (2010). *A short history of initial VET teacher training*. Retrieved from https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/a-short-history-of-initial-vet-teacher-training

Guthrie, H., & Clayton, B. (2010). Building capability in vocational education and training providers: The TAFE cut. *NCVER - occassional paper*, 33.

Hager, P. (2007). Towards a new paradigm of vocational learning. In L. Clarke & C. Winch (Eds.), *Vocational Education*. London: Routledge.

Halliday-Wynes, S., & Misko, J. (2013). *Assessment issues in VET: minimising the level of risk*. Retrieved from Adelaide, SA, Australia: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/assessment-issues-in-vet-minimising-the-level-of-risk

Hamilton, M. (2007). Reflections on agency and change in the policy process. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 59*(2), 249-260. doi:10.1080/13636820701359073

Hargreaves, A. (1993). Individualism and Individuality: Reiterpreting the teacher culture. *International Journal of Educational Research, 19*(3).

Harmsen, N. (2018, 4 April). TAFE SA failings laid bare as federal regulator gives courses the all clear. *ABC News*. Retrieved from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-04/tafe-sa-failings-laid-bare-as-courses-given-all-clear/9617696

Harris, R. (2015). Quality in the Australian VET sector: what has been happening? *International Journal of Training Research, 13*(1), 16-34. doi:10.1080/14480220.2015.1051348

Harris, R. (2017). What do we learn from 40 years of history? Issues in VET teacher education from Kangan to today. *International Journal of Training Research*, 1-19. doi:10.1080/14480220.2017.1321158

Harris, R., & Simons, M. (2005). Exploring the notion of retention in apprenticeship. *Education + Training, 47*(4/5), 350-365. doi:10.1108/00400910510601922

Harris, R., & Simons, M. (2012). *Two sides of the same coin: leaders in private providers juggling educational and business imperatives*. Retrieved from Adelaide, SA, Australia: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/two-sides-of-the-same-coin-leaders-in-private-providers-juggling-educational-and-business-imperatives

Harvey, D. (2005). *Neoliberalism: A brief history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hay, C. (2012). 'What is to count as knowledge': The evolving directing programme at the National Institute of Dramatic Art. *Australasian Dramatic Studies, 60*, 194-207.

Hay, K. E., & Barab, S. A. (2001). Constructivism in Practice: A Comparison and Contrast of Apprenticeship and Constructionist Learning Environments. *Journal of the Learning Sciences, 10*(3), 281-322. doi:10.1207/S15327809JLS1003_3

Haycock, J. (2009). Lost on a pragmatist highway: Searching for a theory to inform teaching practice in TAFE. *International Journal of Training Research, 7*(2), 95-105. doi:10.5172/ijtr.7.2.95

Heaney, J.-G., Ryan, P., & Heaney, M. F. (2010). *Branding private higher education institutions in Australia to International Students*. Paper presented at the Academy of

World Business Marketing and Management Development Conference, Oulu, Finland.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2010). *Mixed methods research merging theory with practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2011). *The practice of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Hesse-Biber, S. N., Johnson, R. B., Rodriguez, D., & Frost, N. A. (2015). *A Qualitatively Driven Approach to Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research*: Oxford University Press.

Hesse, J. J., Hood, C., & Peters, B. G. (Eds.). (2003). *Paradoxes in public sector reform: an international comparison*. Berlin: Berlin Duncker & Humblot.

Hickox, M., & Moore, R. (1995). Liberal-humanist education: The vocationalist challenge. *Curriculum Studies, 3*(1), 45-59.

Hodge, S. (2016). Alienating curriculum work in Australian vocational education and training. *Critical Studies in Education, 57*(2), 143-159. doi:10.1080/17508487.2015.1009842

Hodge, S. (2017). Teachers, curriculum and the neoliberal imaginary of Education. In M. Peters, B. Cowie, & I. Menter (Eds.), *A companion to research in teacher education*. Singapore: Springer.

Hodge, S., Holford, J., Milana, M., Waller, R., & Webb, S. (2018). Economic theory, neoliberalism and the interests of educators. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 37*(3), 279-282. doi:10.1080/02601370.2018.1484009

Hodkinson, P. (2008). Scientific Research, Educational Policy, and Educational Practice in the United Kingdom: The Impact of the Audit Culture on Further Education. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 8*(3), 302-324. doi:10.1177/1532708607310787

Hoggett, P. (1996). New modes of control in the public service. *Public Administration, 74*(1), 9-32. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9299.1996.tb00855.x

Honingh, M., & Karsten, S. (2007). Marketization in the Dutch vocational education and training sector. *Public Management Review, 9*(1), 135-143. doi:10.1080/14719030601181274

Hyland, T. (2003). *The changing face of further education : lifelong learning, inclusion and community values in further education*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Illsley, R., & Waller, R. (2017). Further education, future prosperity? The Implications of Marketisation on Further Education Working Practices. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 22*(4), 477-494. doi:10.1080/13596748.2017.1381291

Jacob, E., Sellick, K., & McKenna, L. (2012). Australian registered and enrolled nurses: Is there a difference? *International Journal of Nursing Practice, 18*(3), 303-307. doi:10.1111/j.1440-172X.2012.02037.x

Jamieson, I., & Naidoo, R. (2004). How the market economy is undermining HE performance. *Management in Education, 18*(4), 13-16. doi:10.1177/08920206040180040301

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. B. (2004). *Educational research : quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Jones, P. (1982). The Commonwelath Grants Commission and Education: 1950-1970. In G. Harman & D. Smart (Eds.), *Ferderal Intervention in Australian Education* (pp. 95-112). Melbourne: Georgian House.

Kalargyrou, V. (2011). Administrative Challenges in Hospitality Management Education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 23*(3), 34-42. doi:10.1080/10963758.2011.10697011

Kalargyrou, V., & Wood, R. (2012). Academics vs. Professional Managers when Leading Hospitality Management Education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 24*(4), 5-13. doi:10.1080/10963758.2012.10696676

Kennedy, M. M. (2010). Against Boldness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 16-20. doi:10.1177/0022487109347876

Knight, B. (2012). *Evolution of apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia: an unfinished history*. Retrieved from Adelaide: https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A50098

Knowles, M. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy*. Chicago: Follet Publishing Company.

Köpsén, S. (2014). How vocational teachers describe their vocational teacher identity. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 66*(2), 194-211. doi:10.1080/13636820.2014.894554

Korbel, P., & Misko, J. (2016). *VET provider market structures: history, growth and change*. Retrieved from Adelaide, SA: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-provider-market-structures-history-growth-and-change

Krarup, T., & Munk, M. D. (2014). Field theory in cultural capital studies of educational attainment. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37*(5), 761-779. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.969398

Kwong, J. (2000). Introduction: Marketization and privatization in education. *International Journal of Educational Development, 20*(2), 87-92. doi:10.1016/S0738-0593(99)00060-7

Lamont, A., & Maton, K. (2008). Choosing music: exploratory studies into the low uptake of music GCSE. *British Journal of Music Education, 25*(3), 267-282. doi:10.1017/S0265051708008103

Le Grand, J. (2003). *Motivation, agency, and public policy: Of knights and knaves, pawns and queens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leys, C. (2003). *Market-driven politics: Neoliberal Democracy and the public interest*. Great Britain: Verso Books.

Liamputtong, P. (2012). *Qualitative research methods* (4th ed.). South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications.

Locke, P., & Maton, K. (2019). Serving two masters: how vocational educators experience marketisation reforms. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 71*(1), 1-20. doi:10.1080/13636820.2018.1480521

Loughland, T., & Sriprakash, A. (2014). Bernstein revisited: the recontextualisation of equity in contemporary Australian school education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37*(2), 230-247. doi:10.1080/01425692.2014.916604

Lundberg, D. (1993). *Decentralization of Public Vocational Training in New Zealand and two Australian states*. Retrieved from Geneva: https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv:9512

Malone, P. (2015, March 19). Abuse of VET fee-help scheme shows regulation has its place in education sector. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Marginson, S. (1997). *Markets in education*. St. Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin.

Martin, T. (2012). Policy to practice: TAFE teachers' unofficial code of professional conduct - Insights from Western Australia. *International Journal of Training Research, 10*(2), 118-131. doi:10.5172/ijtr.2012.10.2.118

Maton, K. (2000). Languages of Legitimation: The structuring significance for intellectual fields of strategic knowledge claims. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 21*(2), 147-167. doi:10.1080/713655351

Maton, K. (2005). A question of autonomy: Bourdieu's field approach and higher education policy. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(6), 687-704. doi:10.1080/02680930500238861

Maton, K. (2014). *Knowledge and Knowers: Towards a Realist Sociology of Education*. London: Routledge.

Maton, K. (2018). Thinking like Bourdieu: Completing the mental revolution with Legitimation Code Theory. In J. Albright, D. Hartman, & J. Widin (Eds.), *Bourdieu's field theory and the social sciences* (pp. 249-268). Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maton, K., & Chen, R. T. H. (2016). LCT in qualitative research: Creating a language of description to study constructivist pedagogy. In K. Maton, S. Hood, & S. Shay (Eds.), *Knowledge-building: Educational studies in legitimation code theory* (pp. 27-48). Abingdon: Routledge.

Maton, K., Hood, S., & Shay, S. (2016). *Knowledge-building: Educational studies in Legitimation Code Theory*. London: Routledge.

Maton, K., & Howard, S. K. (2016). LCT in mixed-methods research: Evolving an instrument for quantitative data. In K. Maton, S. Hood, & S. Shay (Eds.), *Knowledge-building: Educational studies in Legitimation Code Theory* (pp. 49-71). Abingdon: Routledge.

Maton, K., & Howard, S. K. (2018). *Taking autonomy tours: A key to integrative knowledge-building*. Retrieved from Sydney, Australia: www.legitimationcodetheory.com

Maton, K., & Moore, R. (2010). *Social realism, knowledge and the Sociology of Education*. London: Bloomsbury.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design : an interactive approach* (2nd ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McCulloch, A. (2009). The student as co-producer: learning from public administration about the student–university relationship. *Studies in Higher Education, 34*(2), 171-183. doi:10.1080/03075070802562857

McKenna, S. (2019). *The constrained autonomy of the post-graduate supervisor*. Paper presented at the 3rd Legitimation Code Theory Conference, Johannesburg, SA.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Meyer, B. (2019). *Autonomy journeys and pedagogic moves: A lesson cycle in a first year university classroom*. Paper presented at the Third International Legitimation Code Theory Conference, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, SA.

Mitchell, G. J., & Cody, W. K. (2002). Ambiguous Opportunity: Toiling for Truth of Nursing Art and Science. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 15*(1), 71-79. doi:10.1177/08943180222108660

Mitchell, J. (2012). *From unease to alarm: escalating concerns about the model of 'VET reform' and cutbacks to TAFE*. Retrieved from Australia: http://www.jma.com.au/upload/pages/home/_jma_vet-reform-document.pdf

Molnar, A. (1996). *Giving kids the business: The commercialization of America's schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Moore, R. (1987). Education and the Ideology of Production. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 8*(2), 227-242. doi:10.1080/0142569870080208

Morrison, A., & Barry O'Mahony, G. (2003). The liberation of hospitality management education. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 15*(1), 38-44. doi:10.1108/09596110310458972

Msusa, N. (2019). *Autonomy analysis of the mathematics comprehension test of academic potential*. Paper presented at the Third International Legitimation Code Theory Conference, University of Witwatersand, Johannesburg, SA.

Murray-Smith, S. (1965). Technical Education in Australia: A Historical sketch. In E. L. Wheelwright (Ed.), *Higher Education in Australia*. Melbourne: F.W. Chesire.

Murray-Smith, S. (1966). Technical Education: The lines of development. In C. Sanders (Ed.), *Technical Education for Development*. Nedlands, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press.

Myers, L. P. (2016). Knowledge structures and their relevance for teaching and learning in introductory financial accounting. *South African Journal of Accounting Research, 30*(1), 79-95.

Naidoo, R., & Jamieson, I. (2007). Empowering participants or corroding learning? Towards a research agenda on the impact of student consumerism in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(3), 267-281. doi:10.1080/02680930500108585

Naidoo, R., Shankar, A., & Veer, E. (2011). The consumerist turn in higher education: Policy aspirations and outcomes. *Journal of Marketing Management, 27*(11-12), 1142-1162. doi:10.1080/0267257x.2011.609135

Nair, G., & Kigotho, M. (2017). *Disturbing effects of VET reforms on TAFE teaching units*. Paper presented at the AVETRA, Melbourne.

Nakar, S. (2016). Understanding dilemmas faced by VET teachers and their implications for international students, teachers and VET institutions. *International Journal of Training Research, 14*(1), 49-61. doi:10.1080/14480220.2016.1156316

Nakar, S., Bagnall, R. G., & Hodge, S. (2018). A Reflective Account of the VET FEE-HELP Initiative as a Driver of Ethical Dilemmas for Vocational Education Teachers in Australia. *Australian Educational Researcher, 45*(3), 383-400.

Natale, S. M., & Doran, C. (2011). Marketization of Education: An Ethical Dilemma. *Journal of Business Ethics, 105*(2), 187-196. doi:10.1007/s10551-011-0958-y

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2015). *Government-funded students and courses 2014*. Retrieved from Adelaide: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/collections/students-and-courses-collection/government-funded-students-and-courses

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2016). Total VET students and courses 2015: infographic. In (pp. 1 infographic). Adelaide: NCVER.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2017). *Historical time series of government-funded vocational education and training from 1981 to 2017*. Retrieved from http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/459002.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2018a). Australian vocational education and training statistics: government-funded students and courses: January to March 2018. In (pp. 19 p. (report) + 19 p. (support document)). Adelaide: NCVER.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2018b). *Total VET students and courses 2017*. Retrieved from Adelaide: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/total-vet-students-and-courses-2018

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019). *Apprentices and trainees 2019: March quarter - Australia*. Retrieved from Adelaide: https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/apprentices-and-trainees-2019-march-quarter-australia

Nechvoglod, L., Mlotkowski, P., & Guthrie, H. (2010). National TAFE workforce study 2008. In. Adelaide: NCVER.

Nightingale, F. (1969). *Notes on nursing: what it is, and what it is not*. New York: Dover Publications.

NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory tribunal. (2006). *Upskilling NSW: How vocational education and training can help overcome skills shortages, improve labour market*

outcomes and raise economic growth. Retrieved from Sydney: https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/34337216?selectedversion=NBD41167082

Nursing and Midwifery Board Australia. (2019). Approved programs of study. Retrieved from https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/accreditation/approved-programs-of-study.aspx

O'Brien, P., & Down, B. (2002). What are teachers saying about new managerialism? *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 3*(1), 111-133.

O'Donoghue, T. A. (1994). The Impact of Restructuring on Teachers' Understandings of Their Curriculum Work: A Case Study. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 9*(2), 21.

Oliver, D., Yu, S., & Buchanan, J. (2019). Political Economy of Vocational Education and Training. In D. Guile & L. Unwin (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of vocational education and training*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Orr, K., & Simmons, R. (2010). Dual identities: the in-service teacher trainee experience in the English further education sector. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 62*(1), 75-88. doi:10.1080/13636820903452650

Owczarzak, J., Broaddus, M., & Pinkerton, S. (2016). Audit Culture: Unintended Consequences of Accountability Practices in Evidence-Based Programs. *American Journal of Evaluation, 37*(3), 326-343. doi:10.1177/1098214015603502

Paris, D. C. (1994). Schools, scapegoats, and skills: educational reform and the economy. *Policy Studies Journal, 22*, 10+.

Pasura, R. (2014). Neoliberal Economic Markets in Vocational Education and Training: Shifts in Perceptions and Practices in Private Vocational Education and Training in Melbourne, Australia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 12*(4), 564-582. doi:10.1080/14767724.2014.906300

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods : integrating theory and practice* (Fourth edition. ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pavesic, D. (1993). Hospitality Education 2005: Curricular and Programmatic Trends. *Hospitality Research Journal, 17*(1), 285-294. doi:10.1177/109634809301700123

Pearce, L. D. (2012). Mixed Methods Inquiry in Sociology. *American Behavioral Scientist, 56*(6), 829-848. doi:10.1177/0002764211433798

Pickersgill, R. (2004). The engagement of vocational education and training and innovation in Australia: Some historical perspectives. In S. Dawe (Ed.), *Vocational education and training and innovation: research readings* (pp. 20-41). Adelaide: NCVER.

Polesel, J., Klatt, M., Blake, D., & Starr, K. (2016). Understanding the nature of school partnerships with business in delivery of vocational programmes in schools in Australia. *Journal of Education and Work, 30*(3), 283-298. doi:10.1080/13639080.2016.1165344

Polidano, C. (2012). Impacts of Demand-Driven Reforms on Access to Vocational Education and Training for People with Disability. *The Australian Economic Review, 46*(3), 369-378.

Pollitt, C., & Dan, S. (2011). The New Public Management in International Perspective: An analysis of Impacts and Effects. In K. McLaughlin, S. Osbourne, & E. Ferlie (Eds.), *New Public Management: Current trends and future prospects*. London: Routledge.

Ponterotto, J., Mathew, J., & Raughley, B. (2013). The Value of Mixed Methods Designs to Social Justice Research in Counseling and Psychology. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology, 5*(2), 42-68.

Powell, L. (2012). Reimagining the purpose of VET – Expanding the capability to aspire in South African Further Education and Training students. *International Journal of Educational Development, 32*(5), 643-653. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.01.008

Pratt, D. D. (1998). *Five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

Productivity Commission. (2011). *Vocational Education and training workforce*. Retrieved from Canberra: https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/education-workforce-vocational/report

Pusey, M. (1991). *Economic rationalism in Canberra : a nation-building state changes its mind*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

QSR International Pty Ltd. (2018). NVivo qualitative data analysis software. In (Vol. Version 12).

Randle, K., & Brady, N. (1997). Further Education and the New Managerialism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 21*(2), 229-239. doi:10.1080/0309877970210208

Rauner, F., & Smith, E. (2010). *Rediscovering apprenticeship : research findings of the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship (INAP)*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Reay, D., Davies, J., David, M., & Ball, S. J. (2001). Choices of Degree or Degrees of Choice? Class, `Race' and the Higher Education Choice Process. *Sociology, 35*(4), 855-874. doi:10.1177/0038038501035004004

Robertson, S. L., & Woock, R. R. (1989). Reform and Reaction in Australian Education. *Urban Education, 24*(1), 3-24. doi:10.1177/0042085989024001001

Robson, J. (1998). A profession in crisis: status, culture and identity in the further education college. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 50*(4), 585-607. doi:10.1080/13636829800200073

Romanowski, M. H., Cherif, M., Al Ammari, B., & Al Attiyah, A. (2013). Qatar's Educational Reform: The Experiences and Perceptions of Principals, Teachers and Parents. *International Journal of Education, 5*(3), 108. doi:10.5296/ije.v5i3.3995

Ross, J. (2014, February 19 2014). Federal push to 'tidy up' training. *The Australian*. Retrieved from http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/federal-push-to-tidy-up-training/story-e6frgcjx-1226830861901

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2019). Examining the "Weak Field" of Adult Education. In A. Fejes & E. Nylander (Eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning* (pp. 15-31). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Russell, R. L. (1990). *From Nightingale to now : nurse education in Australia*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Ryan, R. (2002). *Building a National Vocational Education and Training system*. Adelaide: Institute of International Education Research, Flinders University.

Ryan, R. (2011). How VET responds: a historical policy perspective. In. Adelaide: NCVER.

Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social research* (4th edition. ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schmidt, T. (2017). Context and capabilities: tensions between managers' and teachers' views of advanced skills in VET. *International Journal of Training Research*, 1-14. doi:10.1080/14480220.2017.1331862

Schofield, K. (2000). *The good, the bad and the ugly. Perspectives from three states on the quality of Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship system*. Paper presented at the 9th Annual VET Researchers Conference, Coffs Harbour, NSW, Australia.

Seddon, T. (2000). Capacity-building: Beyond state & market. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 7*, 35-53.

Seddon, T. (2009a). Contestability, information asymmetry and quality signals in a competitive training market. In T. Karmel, F. Beddie, & S. Dawe (Eds.), *Competition in the training market* (pp. 65-74). Adelaide, SA, Australia: NCVER.

Seddon, T. (2009b). The productivity challenge in Australia: The case for professional renewal in VET teaching. *International Journal of Training Research, 7*(1), 56-76. doi:10.5172/ijtr.7.1.56

Shain, F., & Gleeson, D. (2010). Under new management: changing conceptions of teacher professionalism and policy in the further education sector. *Journal of Education Policy, 14*(4), 445-462. doi:10.1080/026809399286288

Shreeve, R., & Palser, J. (2018). Marketisation of VET: the New South Wales response 1990s-2017. In. Melbourne: LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne.

Simmons, R. (2010). Globalisation, neo-liberalism and vocational learning: the case of English further education colleges. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 15*(4), 363-376. doi:10.1080/13596748.2010.526797

Singhal, P. (2018, October 5). Former TAFE head faced extensive probe over comments made to pregnant employee. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from https://www.smh.com.au/education/former-tafe-head-faced-extensive-probe-over-comments-made-to-pregnant-employee-20181002-p507b6.html

Smith, E. (2010). *Pedagogy not political pointscoring: how training providers teach international students*. Paper presented at the 13th AVETRA annual conference, Surfers' Paradise, Queensland, Australia.

Smith, E., & Teicher, J. (2017). Re-thinking skill through a new lens: evidence from three Australian service industries. *Journal of Education and Work, 30*(5), 515-516. doi:10.1080/13639080.2016.1243231

Smith, E., & Yasukawa, K. (2017). What makes a good VET teacher? Views of Australian VET teachers and students. *International Journal of Training Research, 15*(1), 23. doi:10.1080/14480220.2017.1355301

Smith, R., & O'Leary, M. (2013). New Public Management in an age of austerity: knowledge and experience in further education. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 45*(3), 244-266. doi:10.1080/00220620.2013.796913

Smyth, J. (1995). What's Happening to Teachers' Work in Australia? *Educational Review, 47*(2), 189-198. doi:10.1080/0013191950470206

Spours, K., Coffield, F., & Gregson, M. (2007). Mediation, translation and local ecologies: understanding the impact of policy levers on FE colleges. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 59*(2), 193-211. doi:10.1080/13636820701342889

Stake, R. E. (2008). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2004). Blazing a trail for policy theory and practice. In G. Steiner-Khamsi (Ed.), *The global politics of educational borrowing & lending* (pp. 201-220). New York: Teachers College Press.

Stierand, M., & Zizka, L. (2015). Reflecting on hospitality management education through a practice lens. *Quality Assurance in Education, 23*(4), 353-363. doi:10.1108/QAE-04-2015-0013

Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). *Globalisation and its discontents*. New York: W.W Norton & company.

Tertiary Education Commission. (1978). *The formal preparation of TAFE teachers in Australia [Fleming report]*. Retrieved from Canberra: https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A8125

Tomazin, F. (2015, September 19). Stop the rorts: $30 million crackdown looms for vocational sector's dodgy training providers. *The Age*.

Tomazin, F. (2018, April 22). How Australia's education debacle is still creating victims. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/how-australia-s-education-debacle-is-still-creating-victims-20180419-p4zal3.html

Tomlinson, M. (2017). Student perceptions of themselves as 'consumers' of higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 38*(4), 450-415. doi:10.1080/01425692.2015.1113856

Toner, P. (2014). Contracting out publicly funded vocational education: A transaction cost critique. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review, 25*(2), 222-239. doi:10.1177/1035304614533624

Tran, L. T., & Nyland, C. (2013). Competency-Based Training, Global Skills Mobility and the Teaching of International Students in Vocational Education and Training. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 65*(1), 143-157. doi:10.1080/13636820.2012.755215

Trow, M. A. (2010). *Twentieth-century higher education : elite to mass to universal*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tyler, M., & Dymock, D. (2017). Continuing professional development for a diverse VET practitioner workforce. In. Adelaide: NCVER.

Vanlaere, L., & Gastmans, C. (2007). Ethics in Nursing Education: Learning To Reflect On Care Practices. *Nursing Ethics, 14*(6), 758-766. doi:10.1177/0969733007082116

Vauchez, A. (2011). Interstitial Power in Fields of Limited Statehood: Introducing a "Weak Field" Approach to the Study of Transnational Settings. *International Political Sociology, 5*(3), 340-345. doi:10.1111/j.1749-5687.2011.00137_4.x

Wahlberg, M., & Gleeson, D. (2003). 'Doing the business': paradox and irony in vocational education – GNVQ business studies as a case in point. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 55*(4), 423-446. doi:10.1080/13636820300200238

Wang, J., Odell, S. J., Klecka, C. L., Spalding, E., & Lin, E. (2010). Understanding Teacher Education Reform. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(5), 395-402. doi:10.1177/0022487110384219

Wheelahan, L. (2007). How competency-based training locks the working class out of powerful knowledge: a modified Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 28*(5), 637-651. doi:10.1080/01425690701505540

Wheelahan, L. (2009). Do educational pathways contribute to equity in tertiary education in Australia? *Critical Studies in Education, 50*(3), 261-275. doi:10.1080/17508480903156854

Wheelahan, L. (2010). Literature review: The quality of teaching in VET. *Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations report*, 1-46.

Wheelahan, L. (2013). The race to the bottom in the VET market & why TAFE cannot win: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment Inquiry into TAFE. Retrieved from House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment

Wheelahan, L. (2015). The Future of Australian Vocational Education Qualifications depends on a new Social Settlement. *Journal of Education and Work, 28*(2), 126-146.

Wheelahan, L. (2016). 'College for all' in Anglophone countries – meritocracy or social inequality? An Australian example. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 21*(1-2), 33-48. doi:10.1080/13596748.2015.1125675

Wheelahan, L., Arkoudis, S., Moodie, G., Fredman, N., & Bexley, E. (2012). Shaken not stirred?: the development of one tertiary education sector in Australia. In. Adelaide: NCVER.

Wheelahan, L., & Moodie, G. (2010). *The quality of teaching in VET : final report and recommendations*. Retrieved from Melbourne, Australia: https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2554973/quality_vetteaching_final_report1.pdf

Wheelahan, L., & Moodie, G. (2011). The quality of teaching in VET. In. Mawson: Australian College of Educators.

Wheelahan, L., & Moodie, G. (2017). Vocational education qualifications' roles in pathways to work in liberal market economies. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 69*(1), 10. doi:10.1080/13636820.2016.1275031

Wilkinson, J. (2014). *TAFE organisation and funding in NSW: Past and present*. Retrieved from Sydney: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/researchpapers/Documents/tafe-organisation-and-funding-in-nsw-past-and-pr/Training%20in%20NSW.pdf

Willis, I. (2011). Traditional trades training, a story of failure and success. *Australian TAFE Teacher, 45*(3), 10-12.

Winberg, C., Winberg, S., Jacobs, C., Garraway, J., & Engel-Hills, P. (2016). "I take engineering with me": Epistemological transitions across engineering curriculum. *Teaching in Higher Education, 21*(4), 398-414. doi:10.1080135625171160045

Wolff, K. (2017). Engineering problem-solving knowledge: the impact of context. *Journal of Education and Work, 30*(8), 840-853. doi:10.1080/13639080.2017.1380299

Wolff, K., & Hoffman, F. (2014). Knowledge and knowers in engineering assessment. *Critical studies in teaching and learning, 2*(1), 74-95.

Wolmarans, N. (2016). Exploring the role of disciplinary knowledge in engineering when learning to design. In R. S. Adams, P. Buzzanell, & J. A. Siddiqui (Eds.), *Analyzing Design Review Conversations*. Purdue: Purdue University Press.

Woods, M. (2011). An Ethic of Care in Nursing: Past, Present and Future Considerations. *Ethics and Social Welfare, 5*(3), 266-276. doi:10.1080/17496535.2011.563427

Yin, R. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation, 19*, 321-332.

Yu, S., & Oliver, D. (2015). The capture of public wealth by the for-profit VET sector. In. Sydney: Workplace Research Centre.

Zoellner, D. (2016). Active social policy meets the discipline of the Australian marketplace: the outcomes of mobile policies. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 68*(2), 214-228. doi:10.1080/13636820.2015.1133695

APPENDIX 1 – Interview guide

All interviews will be semi-structured to allow the participants to explore issues that they consider to be salient. They will guide the flow of conversation; however, the interviews will attempt to cover the topics listed below. Four groups of questions explore: interviewees' educational background; their perspectives on current reforms in TAFE; origins of reforms; and their implementation. Before the interviews begin, I will explain that I am looking primarily at larger scale policy reforms (specifically citing the recent *Smart and Skilled* reform as an example, but also that I am looking at how these broader policy reforms are translated into smaller institution and departmental level changes.

General Questions

1. How long have you been working in TAFE?
2. How did you come to work for TAFE?
3. Have you worked for other educational institutions apart from TAFE?

History of reforms

1. During the time you have been working for TAFE have you experienced many reforms?
2. What things have changed as a result of these reforms?
3. Have they changed the way you teach students?
4. Which reforms have caused the biggest changes?

Origins of reforms

1. Where do you think the ideas behind recent educational reforms originated?
2. Do you feel as if the reforms are aimed at achieving educational or economic benefits?
3. Do you feel like those who designed the reforms had a good grasp of vocational education?
4. Do you see a substantial difference between TAFE and private RTOs?

Implementation of reform

1. How much feedback and input do you feel teachers have had in the new educational reforms?
2. Do you feel as if these changes have been implemented too quickly?
3. How much local support do you feel you have received throughout the reform process?
4. What sort of professional development have you received that may help you interpret and make meaning of state and national policy reforms?

APPENDIX 2 – Survey device

The bulk of the questionnaire will take the form of statements about TAFE on a likert scale. Questions will range from current positions on TAFE, opinions on the value of teaching and questions on reforms to marketize the education sector.

1. During my time working for TAFE there has been a large amount of reforms
2. These reforms have had a substantial impact on my job
3. The recent *Smart and Skilled* policy changes have changed my job more than any other reforms during my time working for TAFE
4. The *Smart and Skilled* reforms made TAFE a more efficient organisation
5. Reforms in TAFE have had a practical impact on my day-to-day teaching
6. Since the *Smart and Skilled* reforms my relationship with students has improved
7. I approve of the direction TAFE is moving in
8. Due to reforms within TAFE I now have more non-teaching obligations
9. I feel that TAFE performs an important role in the Australian community
10. I enjoy working for a public institution and feel like I am contributing to the community
11. Under the free training market, I would be inclined to join a private training provider
12. Competition motivates me to improve my teaching
13. Policy changes in TAFE in the past have not made substantial impacts on my teaching practice
14. I feel I have substantial autonomy in my role as a teacher
15. I used to have more autonomy in my teaching practices

Likert scale for each question:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

At the completion of the survey there will be the opportunity for participants who would be keen to participate in a further interview on the subject to enter their email in order to be contacted. Additionally, the same option would be available for those interested in receiving the results of the study.

APPENDIX 3 – Participant Information Statements and Participant Consent Form

This appendix will include three forms:

- Participants information statement for interviewees

- Participant consent form for interviewees

- Participants information statement for survey participants

There is no participant consent form for the survey participants, as by completing the survey they were giving their consent.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about marketization reform in vocational education. The aim of this project is to examine the how teachers experience marketization reforms within education and adapt to new educational environments. Teachers and educationalists within Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are in a unique position to comment on this issue due to their position as on-the-ground educators who are directly affected by these reforms. Due to the importance of vocational education and training in Australia, an important question becomes: How have teachers experienced reforms in vocational education? The study will aim to address this fundamental question.

You have been invited to participate in this study due to your position as a TAFE teacher in New South Wales (NSW). This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it's up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:
✓ Understand what you have read
✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below
✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:
- Patrick Locke, PhD student of sociology at Sydney University

Patrick Locke is conducting this study as the basis for his PhD at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Karl Maton, Associate Professor in Sociology.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You will be asked to partake in semi-structured interview sessions that will be held in the Sociology and Social Policy department's interview room in RC Mills building, University of Sydney. All interviews will be audio recorded. You will be asked a number of questions about educational reforms within TAFE.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

The interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes long.

(5) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time.

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

(6) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(7) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(8) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

The interviews will collect information focussed around your history as a TAFE teacher and your perspective on reforms within TAFE. All audio recordings of the interviews will only be used for interpretation and analysis of data only. The data from this survey will be published in a student thesis and individuals will not be identified. Data will be kept for 5 years after the study has been completed by the primary researcher and will then be deleted from all hard drives.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(9) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(10) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Patrick Locke will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Karl Maton on +61 2 9351 3902

(telephone) or karl.maton@sydney.edu.au (email) or Patrick Locke via email – Patrick.locke@sydney.edu.au.

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one page lay summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney *[INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained].* As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).* This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:
- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, ……………………………………………………………………… [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.

✓ I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.

✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.

✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney now or in the future.

✓ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

✓ I understand that I may stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.

✓ I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.

I consent to:

- **Audio-recording**   YES   ☐   NO   ☐

Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study?

YES   ☐   **NO**   ☐

If you answered **YES**, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

☐ Postal: _____

_____

☐ Email: _____

203

....
Signature

....
PRINT name

....
Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about marketization reform in vocational education. The aim of this project is to examine the how teachers experience marketization reforms within education and adapt to new educational environments. Teachers within Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are in a unique position to comment on this issue due to their position as on-the-ground educators who are directly affected by these reforms. Due to the importance of vocational education and training in Australia, an important question becomes: How have teachers experienced reforms in vocational education? The study will aim to address this fundamental question.

You have been invited to participate in this study due to your position as a TAFE teacher in New South Wales (NSW). This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it's up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:
✓ Understand what you have read
✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below
✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:
● Patrick Locke, PhD student of sociology at Sydney University

Patrick Locke is conducting this study as the basis for his PhD at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Karl Maton, Associate Professor in Sociology.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You are being asked to take part in an online questionnaire focussing around reforms within TAFE. As a TAFE teacher we are asking for your perspective on these changes.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

The questionnaire should take roughly ten minutes to complete.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

The study is open to any teachers currently employed by TAFE New South Wales on a full time or part time basis, or employed by TAFE NSW within the last two years.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by closing the web-based questionnaire.

Submitting your completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw your responses any time before you have submitted the questionnaire. Once you have submitted it, your responses cannot be withdrawn because they are anonymous and therefore we will not be able to tell which one is yours.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

The questionnaire will collect information focussed around your history as a TAFE teacher and your perspective on reforms within TAFE. The questionnaire will be hosted on www.surveymonkey.com and the results will then be collected by the researcher. The data from this survey will be published in a student thesis and individuals will not be identified. Data will be kept for 5 years after the study has been completed by the primary researcher and will then be deleted from all hard drives.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Patrick Locke will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Karl Maton on +61 2 9351 3902 (telephone) or karl.maton@sydney.edu.au (email) or Patrick Locke via email – Patrick.locke@sydney.edu.au.

(12)   Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by answering the relevant question in the online questionnaire. This feedback will be in the form of a one page lay summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(13)   What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney *[INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained].* As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).* This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:
- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

Having read the above information if you want to participate in the research study please click on the link below to be sent to the survey:

[Survey link]