Social Justice in Contemporary Schooling: some methodological considerations

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Introduction

This paper takes up some of the methodological issues surrounding a Ph.D thesis which considers the construction of social justice in a contemporary school through a critical case analysis.

The world today is going through a period of unprecedented rapid change. Giddens (1984) sees change in contemporary society as moving at such a pace as to be "white hot" (p. 199) and he likens life for those in contemporary society to "riding a juggernaut" (Giddens, 1990, p. 151). Hugh Mackay in his 1993 book "Reinventing Australia" provides interpretive commentary on what life is like in Australia in the 1990s. For him:

The story of Australia between the early Seventies and the early Nineties is the story of a society which has been trying to cope with too much change, too quickly, and on too many fronts. (Mackay 1993, p. 18.)

He sees this as having generated in people a constant feeling of
anxiety which he terms "the big angst". The individual is having to cope daily with changes many of which, when compounded, may lead the person to question basic issues such as, Who am I? and Why am I here? These existential questions are at the core of life.

Mackay (1993) outlines seven issues, or key areas of change, associated with the dramatic changes in Australia in the last 20 years. Areas of change which have lead not only to the feelings of anxiety felt by the individual but also to a 'redefinition' of Australian society. The first issue revolves around the redefinition of gender in the wake of the Women's Movement. Women have radically changed their status in society which has meant changes not only in the workforce but also within the family. This has resulted in anxiety not only for women but also for men striving to cope with this change. Both women and men need to find their place within the 'redefined' parameters of gender roles. This issue is evident in schools where new policies related to the education of girls have been put in place. The second issue for Mackay (1993), which is in many ways related to the first, is the redefinition of the family. The divorce rate has increased, due not only to the effects of the Women's Movement but also to changes in laws related to divorce. Marriage is no longer seen by many as a life long commitment. This in turn has redefined in many ways the meaning of family. The emotional strain on all involved in family reorganisation, wife, husband and children, is immense. Children carry these emotional stresses with them into the classroom and as such this becomes an issue in contemporary schooling.

The third issue for Mackay (1993) is that of unemployment, not merely that induced by recession but that which is far more structural in nature. Full employment is a thing of the past and we are now having to confront a redefinition of what is meant by work. The community and school which is the site of this critical case analysis provides an example of the effects of structural unemployment with the parents of many children either unemployed or under-employed. The last 20 years has also seen a proliferation to credit with money almost disappearing with its place being taken by credit cards, an innovation which has also seen dramatic changes in the retail sector. Mackay (1993) points out that it is the technological advances that have allowed the proliferation of credit cards and people free banking. People feel a great deal of anxiety about these changes but feel powerless to respond.

The redistribution of household income, resulting from the redefinition of gender and the increasing number of women in the workforce, is a further area in which Australian society is being redefined. There is an ever increasing gap between what Mackay (1993) defines as the 'new rich' and the 'new poor', accordingly he sees the middle class shrinking. The result of this is to challenge the notion, held for so
long in Australia, that we are an egalitarian society. Figures from the OECD reveal that Australia is in fact the second most unequal western society in that organisation. Within this case study the effects of this change become obvious, within the community studied 50 percent of the households have an income below $25000. This in turn effects the children within those households in both tangible, lack of food, and intangible, rebellion to school, ways.

Multiculturalism is another term that has come recently to our vocabulary in Australia. Australia has always seen immigration and in the last 20 years there has been a widening of the countries from which immigrants come. This is particularly evident in the increase in Asian immigration. Assimilation as quickly as possible has always been the catch cry. Multiculturalism is challenging this and we have now reached the point where our cultural identity itself needs redefining. This is producing a great deal of 'angst' among many Australians. This issue is relevant to the case analysis in that the school has students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

Finally, according to Mackay (1993) there has been a shift in the character of Australian politics. Voters are becoming more cynical, while the difference between the two major political parties is less obvious. Policies seem to have been replaced by personalities.

These are seen by Mackay as crucial issues, although not the only ones, influencing the redefinition of Australian society. They effect the belief systems and behaviour of individuals and as such they are effecting the very institutions of society (Giddens, 1986). A number of these issues are also having an effect on the way social justice is being defined within educational policy and as such within what schools do in the name of social justice. Mackay (1993) makes the point that one of the responses, by governments to this "Age of Redefinition" is to attempt to regulate the conscience of individuals. Social justice policy initiatives in education could be seen as an example of this. Are social justice policy initiatives merely an attempt at social engineering?

As noted previously in Mackay (1993) many of the anxieties including those related to the changing levels of income, unemployment, gender roles and multiculturalism are played out not only in the community in general but in schools including the one which is the focus of this critical case analysis. Parents, students and teachers are all vulnerable to the feelings of 'angst' our rapidly changing society is producing. Declining incomes, increased structural unemployment and family breakdown, to name just a few, are evident. What this means for the school is that teachers are having to come to terms with the emotional effects these issues can have on children and in many cases the parents as well. This is in itself an anxiety producing situation
for teachers who see themselves by and large as members of an ever shrinking middle class (Mackay, 1993). The issues outlined by Mackay then, have direct relevance to the educational focus of this thesis.

The nineties, for Mackay (1993), was to be "The Age of Redefinition" one in which people would re-evaluate their lives. An age of optimism after the "Big Angst" of the eighties. On further consideration of his data, however, Mackay believes this has not been the case:

I foolishly thought this would become part of a social movement in which we would become a more caring, more compassionate kind of society and that we might retreat from some of our strident materialism - but I don't actually think that's happened. As we hit the nineties we're as tough as ever and possibly tougher. Those who are surviving well seem to be less caring. (Mackay, in Legge, 1994, p. 18)

These conclusions have direct relevance to the thesis, dealing as it does with social justice within a contemporary school.

Mackay (1993) has contextualised some of the major issues which are changing the face of Australian society in the nineties. The way we come to experience and understand the changes that are occurring will have a direct bearing on what we mean by social justice. Mackay (1993) has provided some clues as to what the social context of Australia has come to look like. It is a context that sees the intertwining of the local and the global as previous hard boundaries become more permeable and contexts flow one into the other. Where the local and the global become closely intertwined, and where the revising of the dimensions of time and space are key issues in coming to an understanding of, not only this 'reinvented' Australia, but of social justice and its interpretation within a school. Mackay (1993) has provided the canvas on which the artist can paint a picture, in this case the picture is of a river, the river being the metaphor used to show the effects of social justice policy formation in a country primary school in the nineties. Methodologically this will mean addressing the problems associated with studying local/global, individual/society and theory/practice. What is needed are methodological 'tools', chosen with care, with which to paint the picture of the river, the brushes and the paints. These methodological 'tools' must provide a proto-theory which enables the consideration of issues of time and space. One which also allows the tensions around the macro/micro dualism (local/global, individual/society, theory/practice), the problem of binary relationships so evident in Western philosophy in general, to be accommodated. It must also be a perspective that allows the existential issues of life, issues dealing with the anxiety generated by the speed of change, to be considered.
The thesis deals with social justice in a school in the nineties, social justice is not, however, an unproblematic term. We can not assume a stable definition of what social justice is. Mackay (1993) has flagged for us issues that have a crucial bearing on the way social justice has come to be interpreted over the past ten years. Issues related to gender, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status are but some of the contexts around which social justice is now being defined. It is a term that, in the nineties, has been colonised by many, including those from the right, and its shifting definition is influenced by those who 'use' it. It has been, as pointed out by Fitzclarence and Kenway (1991), in recent years closely tied to economics so as to be not only related to the amelioration of disadvantage but also to legitimate state economic policies. Even the notion of disadvantages is problematic with social justice not simply being associated with the lack of material wealth. In the Education Department of South Australia's Social Justice Action Plan, released in 1992, issues of social justice were seen to relate to specific groups within schools including itinerant families, Aboriginal students, students of non-English speaking background and victims of abuse.

What is needed is a deconstruction of the rhetoric of social justice in the context of the social and educational debates of the nineties. To do this the thesis considers social justice in a contemporary country primary school, it considers the policy documents related to issues of social justice together with the views expressed by the participants of the case, the staff, the parents and the students. To contextualise the interpretations of policy, along with the views of the participants the practices which occur within the school in the name of social justice are examined. The site of the case study is a country primary school and the data collection methods included: the keeping of a personal professional journal by the researcher, interviews with staff, parents and students, statistical information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, analysis of educational policies related to social justice and an archive search of the local newspaper and school records.

Methodological Justification

The thesis is concerned with the issue of social justice as it relates to education in a contemporary school. A time labelled by some as 'late modernity', and by others as 'post-modernity'. The methodology of this study is a critical case analysis the case being a country primary school.

The Research Issue

Social justice is now a part of the curriculum and administrative structure of schools. The focus of this research is the construction of social justice in a contemporary school. Such a research focus, dealing as it does with individuals within the social institution of the
school, shows the connectedness of the individual and society. How can this be critically studied/considered? As a means of dealing with the strategic issues related to such a focus, Kemmis with Fitzclarence (1986) provide a clue when they assert that a theory of the structure of schooling and the school curriculum involves a double dialectic - individual/society and theory/practice. The consideration of this double dialectic forms the basis of the interpretation and analysis of this research. Accordingly, it involves consideration of the individual/society relationship and the theory/practice relationship. At the same time it is necessary to consider a methodological position capable of holding these interrelated dualism's together.

The focus of the research: the construction of social justice in a contemporary school suggests the following research questions:

- How is social justice interpreted in educational policy?
- What are teachers, students and parents understandings of social justice as it relates to schooling?
- What does the school do in the name of social justice?
- How successful is the school in relation to social justice?

Why a Meta Theory? Why a Social Theory?

As we saw previously issues of the global and the local are a key feature of the developing social context of the world. These issues are closely linked to the way time and space are being redefined in the world today. Mackay (1993) has shown how these issues have impacted on Australian society. Selby (1992) shows us how they should be reflected in the education students receive. These key issues, of the global and the local, are seen by Selby (1992) as an integral part of what he calls "Global Education" (p.1).

Selby (1992) proposes a four dimensional model as a basis of providing students with a such a "Global Education" (p. 1). Firstly there is a need for the study of the spatial dimension so as to come to an understanding of what he calls the "dynamic, multi-layered world system within which the 'local is in the global, the global in the local'." (Selby, 1992, p. 1) This he calls 'glocality'. What we see here is an indication of the boundaries of current social contexts becoming more permeable with issues flowing across from one context to another. The second dimension of this 'global education' falls under the headings of the environment, development, human rights and peace. These broad areas are subsumed under, or cut across by, issues such as race, gender equity, health and economics. The third dimension Selby (1992) calls temporal globality. In this dimension past, present and future have a
dynamic relationship. Once again the boundaries are permeable and one can flow into another eg. interpretations of the past can grow out of concerns of the present thus influencing the future. Finally Selby (1992) point to the inner dimension, the development of self-awareness. This dimension is not isolated from the previous three 'outer' dimensions, rather, the outer and inner dimensions are seen by Selby (1992) as two complementary and mutually illuminating journeys. We see here in Selby's work the emergence of many of the same issues the were evident in the work of Mackay (1993) previously discussed. They in turn provide a clue to the issues that will need to be considered in this thesis. They are integral to the broader social context of which education is a part. What is needed then is an interpretive tool that allows for the consideration of these issues.

The insights gained from the work of both Mackay (1993) and Selby (1992) suggests that what is needed here, methodologically, is a new perspective. A proto-theory, one of a certain kind which allows the consideration of the macro and the micro, one which acknowledges the links which are emerging between the local and the global. The use of a meta theory as an interpretive tool in the thesis can perhaps be best understood through the use of metaphor. In metaphorical terms one could see social change, which is so important to this thesis, as the mainstream of a river while education is a log floating in that river and being swept along by its current. Social justice is, in these metaphorical terms, a part of the general flow of the river. It is my intention following Sharp (1993), to argue that there is no single theory that can adequately address contemporary society, pervaded as it is by "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, p. 222), as well as accommodate the macro/micro dualism.

The thesis then necessitates the development of a theoretical position which places the concept of social justice in a current cultural context and addresses the problem of the macro/micro, individual/society dualism. One could look to moral philosophy for a meta theory. Alasdair MacIntyre in his book After Virtue (1985) outlines the changes that have occurred in the way justice has been viewed over the centuries, from Pre-Homeric Greece to the present day. While showing its changing face he also shows us that there are enduring features in its history. From this 'history' presented by MacIntyre it would seem that moral philosophy has through the centuries seen justice as desert and justice as merit as recurring themes in theories. MacIntyre's conclusion about the concept of justice in the twentieth century is that it is related to bureaucratic rationality and that it is "prima-facie egalitarian" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 334.). The assertion by MacIntyre (1985) that social justice, in the twentieth century can be seen in terms of bureaucratic rationality indicates that the analysis of educational policy related to social justice will need to occur within the wider issues related to social change.
For the purposes of the interpretation and analysis of the thesis I believe it is social theory, rather than moral philosophy, which will provide the necessary tools. It will allow for the contextualisation of social justice within the current cultural context and thus facilitate an interpretation of it within the sphere of education. This involves the use of a social theory which is able to incorporate the concepts of social justice with issues of the 'postmodern' and education. It is also necessary that the social theory used is one which is conducive to a methodology of critical case analysis. To successfully do this the social theory chosen as the basic interpretive tool must bridge the macro/micro, individual/society dualism so inherent in western culture. A social theory, however, will not stand alone, it must draw in theories of education, ones that are sympathetic to it. The work of moral philosophy will also be drawn on to present an historical perspective on social justice. What social theory, then, will provide the framework for such an interpretive analysis?

Sharp (1993) provides us with a starting point here in that he outlines a framework within which to consider social theory. Within his framework there are three categories of social theory. Classical theory, post-classical theory and a theoretical response to phenomena associated with the "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, p. 222). Sharp (1993) sees classical social theories as ones that focus on society with no concern with the way the individual is formed. Focusing as they do on the structures of modernity they are unable to adequately theorise the effects of technology. The post-classical social theories consider society but also focus on the individual within the society, thus the notion of agency is addressed. These theories in effect address the individual/society dualism in a time they define as late-modernity (Sharp, 1993). According to Sharp (1993) they give some descriptive recognition to the effects of technology but are still tied to many of the assumptions of classical theory. The third category in Sharp's framework is one he labels as a "theoretical response to phenomena associated with extension" (Sharp, 1993, p. 225) He is pointing here to a theory which allows for a world in which the "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, p. 222) are predominant. Within this category he places post-structuralism espousing as it does post-modernity a theory which is built on a linguistic model which aims at deconstruction. Also within this category of Sharp's framework is his assertion that no single theory is adequate when dealing with a critique of today's society, influenced as it is by technology. He would seem to indicate that some combination of post-classical and post-structural theory is one possibility.

Where then do I look, within social theory, for a meta-theoretical position which will provide a basis for interpretation within the
thesis? Classical social theories such as those of Marx, Weber or Durkheim deal with the macro, the structures of society. As such they do not adequately deal with the micro dimension, with the notion of agency, how the human subject interacts with, and on, society. On the other hand the post-structuralists, who have greatly influence the post-modern debate, focus on the micro through their notion of the de-centring of the subject. This according to Sharp (1993) is particularly evident through the linguistic model. Best and Kellner (1991) point out, that postmodern theory, which although deriving from post-structuralism which was an attempt to rescue the agent from the over determinancy of structuralism, seems unable to address the macro aspects of change:

most postmodern theory rejects macro politics... postmodern theory lacks an adequate theory of agency, of an active creative self, mediated by social institutions, discourses and other people. (pp. 183.)

and further to this:

postmodern theory fails to provide the instruments needed to analyze its own moment in history and the events of the 1980s in which it rose to international prominence . (pp. 295.)

The use of aspects of postmodern theory, however, are essential in the interpretation and analysis of this research as will be shown below. The issue of binary relationships, the macro/micro dualism, remains a problem in Western philosophy, however, a number of post-classical theorists including Habermas, Bourdieu, Lichtman and Giddens (Livesay, 1989) have provided valuable contributions to the bridging of this dualism.

Dews (1987) points out that to some extent both theoretical schools; the post-classical and the post-modern/post-structuralist actually share a number of philosophical antecedents. Further to this:

the recent upsurge of interest in post-structuralism among contemporary Critical Theorists suggests, there are striking convergences between the Frankfurt interpretation of Marxism and post-structuralist thought. (Dews, 1987, p. xvi.)

Best and Kellner (1991) support the notion that there is no one model for theory in contemporary times when they state:

we do not believe that any given theorist, method, tradition, or style provides the model for a critical theory of the present age. Instead, we would support the production of a variety of theories of society which would draw upon the best of postmodern theory,
while also drawing on the best of modern theory (p. 272)

What is 'best' in this instance will be determined by the issue of, social justice in a contemporary school.

What is needed for the thesis is a careful selection of a methodological meta-theory from those on offer within social theory so as to best accommodate the issue of binary relationships, the macro/micro dualism. What is required is a theory that will allow for an interpretation of agency as conceptually related to the development of institutions, i.e. where the macro and micro dimensions of society are seen to be interdependent. As previously stated it in my intention to follow Sharp (1993), in arguing that there is no single social theory that can adequately address contemporary society, pervaded as it is by "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, p. 222), as well as accommodate the macro/micro dualism. The issues of contemporary society and its relationship to technology can be evidenced in the many 'events' witnessed by large numbers of the world's population eg. over one billion people 'watched' the opening of the last Olympic Games via television. Within education uses of technology are continually expanding. Students are encouraged to learn about technology and to learn through technology. Within the area of literacy texts generated by the electronic media have become part of the curriculum through their inclusion in the Statement on English for Australian Schools. Computer games, music videos, soap operas and situational comedies are a few of the texts that are now the subject of study in classrooms. They are seen as an important part of the students out of school lives and as such they are used as texts through which to develop a critical literacy awareness (Fairclough, 1992) in students. The proliferation of computers within schools and the increasing number of schools going 'on line' and using the Internet is further demonstration of the way that notions of time and space are being redrawn in the world today. The need for face to face interactions is in many cases disappearing to be replaced by technologically mediated interactions.

What is intended here is to draw on the work of one social theorist as a way of addressing the macro/micro dualism while at the same time acknowledging that some competing theories will prove useful. This brings me to post-classical social theory, and especially to the work of Anthony Giddens. Giddens is Professor of Sociology at Cambridge University in England and for the past 20 years has been a prolific writer in the sociological field. His theory of structuration is able to achieve a great deal in accommodating the methodological stance I use in this research. That is he is a theorist who is most lucid about the problems of binary opposites.

His concern is to theorise the constitution of society in relation to the person, and the relationship of the objective
and the subject. (James, 1987, p. 92)

It is, however, necessary to acknowledge that Giddens is not without his critics. He is seen by some (Sharp, 1993) as still being tied to the classical theorists. While Paul James (1987) believes his theory, in which people are seen as active agents, could reinforce the ideology of liberal individualism. Further to this James (1987) maintains that, to this point, Giddens work has remained interpretive, providing synthesis and critique rather than possibilities for practice. This criticism from James is reinforced by Sharp (1993). He believes that while Giddens has addressed issues of the extended form of the social through his notion of time-space distanciation he does not acknowledge a epochal break with modernity. In maintaining this stand Sharp (1993) believes Giddens leaves the issues related to the extended forms of the social at the level of the interpretive rather than the theoretical.

While acknowledging these criticisms it is still my belief that the work of Giddens will provide a starting point for the study of social justice in a contemporary school.

Bridging the Macro/Micro Dualism: The Theory of Structuration

The research issue dealing as it does with the individual within the institution of the school calls for a interpretive theory that shows the connectedness of the individual and society. Giddens (1982) asserts:

the personal, transient encounters of daily life cannot be conceptually separated from the long term development of institutions. (pp. 10-11.)

What this means is that it is necessary to consider the importance of actions of individuals and collectivities in relation to structures, social systems and resulting institutions. Through his theory of structuration Giddens (1984) defines systems as patterns of relationships across time and space. This then acknowledges the importance of action. Relating this to education Elliott (1993) states that:

Within classrooms pedagogical practices display common patterns of interaction between teachers and pupils spread over time and place. They constitute the instructional system of the school. (Elliott, 1993, p. 182)

According to structuration theory, such systems do not structure the activities of the teachers and pupils because they do not exist outside
of them. There is in fact an interconnectedness between structures and acting individuals and collectivities. In the example given above teachers and students influence pedagogical practices while being influenced by them. Giddens (1984) presents societal and social integration within the "duality of structure". This he defines as follows:

One of the main propositions of structuration theory is that the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction (the duality of structure). (Giddens, 1984, pp. 19)

Thus, in Giddens theory, it is rules and resources which constitute structure. Rules are techniques or generalised procedures applied in the production/reproduction of social practices. Formulated rules those which are verbalised for example laws or bureaucratic rules are codified interpretations of rules rather than rules as such. Giddens defines the characteristics of rules relevant to social analysis in the following way:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{intensivtacet} & \quad \text{informal} & \quad \text{weakly sanctioned} \\
\text{shallow discursive} & \quad \text{formalised} & \quad \text{strongly sanctioned}
\end{align*}
\]

(Giddens, 1984, p. 22)

To take this into the school setting one could see behaviour management practices as exemplifying a rule in the sense used by Giddens. Such practices are the general procedures teachers follow when students 'cause trouble' in the classroom, some of them may have been formalised at the school level and as such they may be strongly sanctioned. They may be more informal, or tacit, within the bounds of the classroom, implicit in the actions of the teacher and as such may be more weakly sanctioned. Intensive rules are those that are constantly used in the classroom such as those related to the use of language, They also include the rules followed for effectively working in a group during classroom activities. Rules play an important part in the sustaining of what Giddens (1984) calls our "ontological security" and are expressed in the main through our practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984) . The notion of practical consciousness is dealt with in more detail below.

Structure, in Giddens terms, is constituted not only by rules but also by resources. Resources are defined by Giddens (1984) as being either allocative or authoritative. Allocative resources are material resources those that have been derived from human domination of nature.
To consider allocative resources in a school context then would require us to refer to the physical aspects of the school. This would include such things as text and reference books, computer hard and software, buildings and desks and chairs. It would even include such things as playground layout, maintenance and equipment. It is according to Giddens (1984) these allocative resources that are closely involved with time-space distanciation.

Authoritative resources are the non-material resources, they result from the dominance of some people over others. Within the school students are organised into class groups each having at least one teacher. Within the classroom authoritative resources relate to the relationship established between teachers and students. The ways in which schools manage large numbers of students is a fundamental sort of authoritative resource. It is a very significant contributor to the generation of power. Giddens (1984) points out that 'structure' i.e. rules and resources, both allocative and authoritative, is not fixed. Structure is both medium and outcome of the practices it recursively organises. Within this theory neither:

subject (human agent) nor object ('society', or social institutions) should be regarded as having primacy. Each is constituted in and through recurrent practices. (Giddens, 1982, p. 8.)

At the core of structuration theory is the notion that action presupposes institutions and institutions presuppose actions. In this sense structure is internal to individual agents rather than external to them. As such structure is not synonymous with constraint. While structure can impose limits on individuals it can also enable them to accomplish things. In a school for example, practices related to dividing students into classes related to year levels may be constraining in that some teachers and students may prefer working with students of different ages. On the other hand it may be seen as enabling in that curriculum materials relating to just one year level can be used.

Giddens (1986) sees society and its institutions in the following way:

A society is a cluster, or system, of institutionalised modes of conduct. To speak of 'institutionalised' forms of social conduct is to refer to modes of belief and behaviour that occur and recur - ...we can speak of economic institutions, political institutions, and so on. (p. 8. original emphasis)

Thus in structuration theory the individual and society are intertwined, the individual creates society just as society creates the individual. A theory that attempts to bridge the macro/micro,
individual/society dualism.

Also central to structuration theory is Giddens notion of three levels of consciousness:

discursive and practical consciousness refer to psychological mechanisms of recall, as, utilized in contexts of action. Discursive consciousness connotes those forms of recall which the actor is able to express verbally. Practical consciousness involves recall to which the agent has access in the duree of action without being able to express what he or she thereby 'knows'. The unconscious refers to modes of recall for which the agent does not have direct access because there is a negative 'bar' of some kind inhibiting its unmediated incorporation within the reflexive monitoring of conduct and, more particularly, within discursive consciousness. (Giddens, 1984, p. 49).

The notion of practical consciousness, is fundamental to structuration theory and important to any study within the field of education. Important in that it refers to the habitual, everyday routine activities in which individuals participate. They know and understand why they are taking certain actions and they unselfconsciously monitor their actions. In the case of teaching there are many 'tacit theories' (Elliott, 1993) underpinning teachers actions that are only reflected on unselfconsciously. When teachers are asked to critically self consciously reflect on their teaching as a means of improving current practices they will often say that such self conscious reflection is a 'natural' part of their teaching, a part of their day to day routine. The chances are, however, that the reflection that is currently occurring is unselfconscious ie. part of the practical consciousness. What is needed is self conscious reflection which is related to what Giddens calls the discursive consciousness in that it can be foregrounded, spoken about and reasons why can be discussed.

The issue of time and space is pivotal to this thesis dealing as it does with a school in contemporary society. As Sharp (1993) points out, the development of "technologically extended forms of the social" (p.222) has had a tremendous impact on the relationship between time and space. Giddens (1990) also acknowledges the change in time-space relations in society today. Time and space Giddens (1990) points out are no longer bound together as they were in pre-modern societies. This results in the 'disembedding' of social relations which in turn has implications for the notion of face-to face interactions. According to Gross (1982) there are four issues related to time-space in Giddens structuration theory. First is Giddens assertion that social systems are "embedded" in time-space. Secondly Giddens criticises the distinction made between synchrony and diachrony which he sees as
pervading contemporary social theory ie societies are either studied vertically over time or laterally as a snapshot frozen in time, Giddens believes both time and space should be studied as intersecting. Further, Gross (1982) points out that Giddens would like to see the re-evaluation of geography as a means of bringing space to the forefront of social theory. Finally Gross sees Giddens as introducing the notion of time-space distanciation, this being the process by which societies bind themselves over greater or lesser stretches of time. Distanciation is for Giddens, according to Gross (1982), a means of generating and exercising power. Gross (1982), is critical of the way in which Giddens has treated time-space. He doesn't believe Giddens has taken into account the erosion of temporality that has been a consequence of capitalism. Gross (1982) also criticises Giddens analysis of time-space as being too simplistic. Despite such criticisms Giddens does provide a basis for an interpretive tool.

Time/space separation is a key factor in the thesis as The River Story, the metaphor used in the thesis, demonstrates. An event that occurs at one point along the 'river' can effect people and places in other areas along the 'river's' course and even places geographically distant from the 'river'. It is also possible for the 'river' to be effected by events distant from its course.

Giddens structuration theory then is one that allows me to deal with the problem of the macro/micro dualism but also issues of, continuity/change, the individual/society and theory/practice all of which are relevant when dealing with issues of social justice in a contemporary school. The contemporary society in which we live is a period referred to by Giddens as 'high modernity' (Giddens, 1991).

Giddens provides the meta-theory which must be contextualised within education. To do this the affective, issues related to education will be interpreted through not only the work of Giddens but also that of Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry & Osborne (1983) who, in their book The Emotional Experience of Learning and Teaching, contextualise in the school many crucial existential issues. To return to our painting of the river, Giddens provides us with our tools for painting but not all of them, only the brushes for the broad strokes are there. Some of the finer brushes are provided by people such as Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry & Osborne (1983).

Addressing Issues of the Post-modern

The importance of the technological changes in society that this thesis emphasises are addressed by Giddens through the 'disembedding' of social relations. Giddens (1990 & 1991)) assertion that we are not yet in the era of post-modernity means that his theory of structuration alone is seen by some (Sharp, 1993) as not adequately theorising
issues of the "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, pp. 222) and the influence they have on the formation of the individual. Sharp (1993) asserts that these issues are dealt with merely at a descriptive level. I would argue that Giddens (1990 & 1991) does go some way in doing this, however, I agree with Sharp in that post-classical theory appears to be still tied, to some degree, to the totalising theories of modernity and does not adequately theorise some of the issues related to technology. To extend on Giddens work I will draw from writers who not only frame their work within the post-modern but consider it with specific reference to education.

Writers such as Hinkson (1991), Green & Bigum (1993 & 1994), Bigum & Green (1992 & 1993), Bigum, Fitzclarence & Green (1994) and Green (1993) provide a theoretical position which will focus on the field of education. More fine brushes for painting our picture of the river. Dealing as they do with the information society and addressing issues such as the effects of the mass media (Hinkson, 1991) and other forms of technology, especially computers, on the formation of the "postmodern student-subject" (Green, 1993) they provide a rich perspective within the context of education.

Contradictions within the Methodological Position

It is already evident that in drawing on post-classical and post-modern/post-structural theories I am not only being eclectic but using theories that are seen as contradictory in nature. Sharp (1993) and Ball (1993) sees no escape from this position if we are to adequately interpret and analyse events in contemporary society. Kemmis (1992) believes that the changes that have occurred in contemporary society mean that we:

will need to reconsider and perhaps modify our theoretical categories, our methodological tools, ... since most of the approaches we now employ ... are the product of modernist perspectives and epistemologies. (p. 28)

Sharp (1993) also defends this position to the extent that he believes that a new theory that is socially critical in nature and incorporating elements of both post-classical and post-structuralist theory needs to be developed. This theory would then adequately cope with the implications of the "technologically extended forms of the social" (Sharp, 1993, p. 222) within the duality of structure:

Apart from contributing to seeing the present as the extension of modernity, rather than a break of continuity marked by the emergence of postmodernity, the post-classical attitude and the commonsensical description which it expresses serve
as a major resource for the installation of postmodern social forms. (Sharp, 1993, p. 235.)

The 'socially critical' social theory that may emerge is one that would be suited to this research as it would provide a basis for the interpretation and analysis of the issues related to social justice in a contemporary school. With no such theory as yet developed I am forced to draw for methodological purposes from several different seemingly contradictory theories.

References


