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CHAPTER FIVE

Same game, same players, different fields: Social work and teacher education in crisis

Joe Hanley and Christian Kerr

The crisis in teacher education this book addresses has many similarities and parallels with the experiences of other professions, including social work, which is the focus of this chapter, written by two social work academics working in England. While social work qualifications in England are generalist, meaning they are required to cover social work practice and policy in a range of contexts, such as working with children, adults and in mental health, it is well documented in both policy and practice that the profession is being progressively narrowed towards targeted, often performative, tasks and skill sets, accompanied by moves to embed a core focus on child protection in place of the broader base of expertise and capacity to work across the lifespan (Thoburn, 2017; Lymbery, 2019; Tunstill, 2019; McGrath-Brookes et al., 2021). This has also seen social work increasingly falling under the primary remit of the Department for Education (DfE), epitomized by the direct control the minister for education now exercises over the professional regulator, Social Work England, which includes appointing the chair, approving the

appointment of chief executives and having veto/modifying rights over all regulatory rules and professional standards.

This focus on working with children and the dominant role of the DfE in social work today also means that the networks and individuals influencing policy in the profession are increasingly the same ones influencing policy in education, and they bring with them many of the same ideas, stemming from the same ideological positioning. In this way they constitute a shared policy network, consisting of shared connections between individuals and organizations, but also (frequently overlapping) historical, personal and ideological connections. While education policy network connections have been explored for some time (Ball, 2008, 2009), interest in the influence these connections have in social work is relatively more recent (Jones, 2019; Tunstill, 2019), and work exploring the shared network connections across these two professions remains particularly limited, with some notable exceptions (Purcell, 2020; Hanley et al., 2021). These network connections tend to privilege ideological compatibility and shared assumptions over professional experience or background, or even meaningful engagement with the subject professions (McGrath-Brookes et al., 2021).

This chapter examines these themes through looking at areas of corresponding policy development between education and social work, with a particular focus on the networks behind them. This is not an attempt to replicate the more extensive network mapping work referenced above but should act as a window into understanding the mutual policy network that is increasingly dominating policy decisions across both professions, and the shared challenges faced. With reference to key examples, we also look at how the operations of networks result in hegemonic control over the reform of both education and social work. To put this discussion into context, we now provide a brief introduction to the contemporary social work profession.

The social work profession

Social work became a regulated profession in England under the Care Standards Act 2000, which also made social work a protected title for the first time, and led to the social work degree becoming

the minimum qualification for new practitioners (Department of Health, 2002). Today, most social workers qualify through three-year undergraduate and two-year postgraduate programmes run by Higher Education Institutions, although as we will discuss, there is increasing diversity of routes into the profession (Skills for Care, 2022).

Social work continuing professional development (CPD) is also regulated in England. Under the current regulator, one of the six professional standards practising social workers are required to meet is: 'I will maintain my continuing professional development' (Social Work England, 2019). Underlining its significance, this is the only standard that social workers are required to provide evidence of to maintain annual registration. Rather than mandating a set national framework for CPD, Social Work England instead places responsibility on individual social workers to engage with 'diverse, flexible and innovative' CPD (Social Work England, 2022). However, decisions around what constitutes appropriate CPD are dictated primarily by social work employers (Rogowski, 2020). Given these employers – mostly local authorities – are heavily influenced by resource considerations driven in the main by years of politically chosen austerity, they understandably tend to favour low-cost options.

As with teaching, social work in England is characterized as being in a constant state of crisis (Dickens, 2011; Lavalette, 2019) and faces levels of habitual negative media and political scrutiny not seen in other jurisdictions, usually involving individual professionals being blamed for the impact of systemic issues rooted in government policy decisions (McCulloch, 2018; Herrero and Charnley, 2019; Jones, 2019). This discourse around placing responsibility on social workers lacks evidential basis but is promoted through self-perpetuating and reinforcing ideology and discourse (McGrath-Brookes et al., 2021; Hanley, 2022b). Some of the systemic issues facing the social work profession today include chronically bad working conditions (Ravalier et al., 2020), difficulty with recruitment and retention (County Councils Network, 2022; Johnson et al., 2022) and a lack of resources (County Councils Network, 2022; Cromarty et al., 2019). This persistent state of crisis, alongside the propensity to blame social workers for these largely systemic issues, has been habitually used to promote policy developments within the aforementioned network, including those discussed in this chapter.

Similarities and parallels with education

What follows here is a brief introduction to key contemporary projects in the realms of social work qualifying and CPD that have notable parallels with developments in the field of education. This list is non-exhaustive and really only scratches the surface, but it does show the shared experiences and challenges across the professions, and in particular the influential networks and problematic ideologies shaping these projects.

Frontline

A key example of these parallels between social work and education is the introduction, rapid expansion and increasing dominance of new professional qualifying programmes in social work. Frontline, focused on social work with children and families, and Think Ahead, focused on mental health social work, were both founded based on the ‘successful’ approach of Teach First, the teacher qualifying programme (MacAlister et al., 2012: 3; Clifton & Thorley, 2014: 7). Both follow the Teach First template, receiving disproportionate government funding through claiming to attract the ‘best and brightest’ by offering a well-paid route into a profession, alongside networking and leadership opportunities that are not afforded to social work students on other routes (MacAlister et al., 2012: 25; Clifton & Thorley, 2014: 5). Linked to these networking and leadership opportunities are promises and incentives imbedded in these programmes of eventually being able to parlay this experience into obtaining more lucrative employment outside of the profession. This can be understood as a form of ‘micro-philanthropy’ whereby candidates are cast as selflessly forgoing high status and pay temporarily to work with disadvantaged groups (Duggan, 2017: 135). This concept is discussed in more detail below.

The negative impacts that Frontline and Think Ahead have had on the social work profession have been described in depth elsewhere, and include inequality of access, high costs, damaging marketing activities and poor retention (Murphy, 2016; Jones, 2019; Tunstill, 2019; Scourfield et al., 2020, 2021; Hanley, 2021a). However, of particular significance to this discussion are the

network connections that link these organizations with education. This is most notable with Frontline, due to the common focus on working with children. Frontline's founder, Josh MacAlister, is a Teach First graduate and has no training or experience in social work, as is the case with the founder of Teach First, Brett Wigdortz, who has no qualification or experience in teaching. MacAlister has recounted the story of how he called in sick from his teaching job so he could attend a meeting with Andrew Adonis, former Labour minister, and Michael Gove, who at the time was Conservative Minister for Education, about his idea for a 'Teach First of social work' (Browning, 2019). At the time, Adonis was a trustee for Teach First, while Gove was overseeing rapid expansion of the programme. Adonis would later go on to act as chair of Frontline's board of trustees and continues to be a patron for the organization. Both Teach First and Frontline are also partners within Transform Society, a network of similar training providers that also includes additional Teach First modelled qualifying programmes for both police and prison officers.

The network connections do not end there. Working with colleagues across the UK we were part of a policy network mapping project in 2021 that focused on identifying the individuals and organizations most influential in children's services today (Hanley

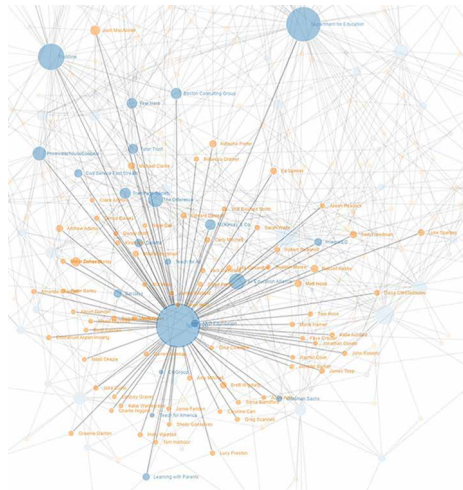


FIGURE 5.1 *Teach First.*

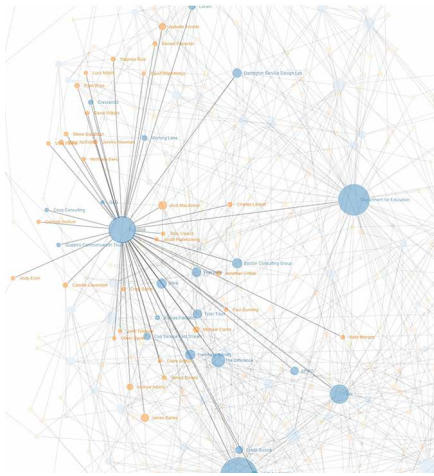


FIGURE 5.2 *Frontline.*

et al., 2021). The final product included over 1000 connections, with Teach First (Figure 5.1) and Frontline (Figure 5.2) being the first and third most connected organizations identified, respectively (the DfE was second). The mapping illustrated the extensive political, business and media connections with and between these organizations, along with several other influential individuals and organizations in children’s services. Not included in the mapping are the many personal connections that are also prominent in this network, including Josh MacAlister being married to Matthew Hood, the former CEO of Ambition Institute, the fifth most connected organization and co-founder of Oak National Academy (see Chapter 2), coming in at number 11.

What works

Another significant parallel between contemporary social work and education reform is the emphasis placed on a rather simplistic, reductive question of ‘what works?’ In social work, this is exemplified by the creation of the What Works for Children’s Social Care (WWCSC), a research centre founded in 2017 with a stated mission to ‘generate, collate and make accessible the best evidence’, primarily

via Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) (WWCSC, n.d.). Those involved in the establishment of WWCSC included Josh MacAlister, as well as the first academic lead of Frontline, Donald Forrester, and the chief social worker for Children and Families in England, Isabelle Trowler, who had a role in designing the curriculum of Frontline and has habitually supported the organization from her role within the DfE. WWCSC is part of a broader What Works Network that is managed by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury, and includes similar centres based in health, homelessness, economic growth and crime reduction. Notably it also includes the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which focuses on educational achievement, and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed dissection of the narrow focus of what works ideology; however, suffice to say that the question of what works as framed by these organizations leaves out key contextual questions, in particular in relation to what counts as something that ‘works’, and what interests and perspectives are prioritized in making that determination (Biesta, 2007, 2017). Furthermore, these centres promote RCTs as the ‘gold standard’ at a time when there is increasing evidence that RCTs do not have a particularly strong track-record outside of strict laboratory conditions (Every-Palmer & Howick, 2014; Greenhalgh et al., 2014; Open Science Collaboration, 2015; Krauss, 2018; Sims et al., 2022). It is therefore not surprising that Webb (2021) has found that since the establishment of the What Works Network and the policy shift towards RCTs as the ‘gold standard’, the promised effectiveness has not materialized, and in particular in relation to supporting children, ‘effectiveness appears to have declined’ (p.14).

MacAlister Review

In January 2021, then Minister for Education Gavin Williamson appointed Frontline founder Josh MacAlister to undertake an ‘independent’ review of children’s social care (hereafter the MacAlister Review), key recommendations of which pertain to significant parallels between social work and education, and if implemented will lead to social work and education policy becoming even more closely aligned (MacAlister, 2022). Major issues were apparent with the review from its inception, most notably related

to the lack of independence of the chair, a concern that was borne out in the approach the review chose to take. This involved central roles and influence for those who already had close ties to the chair and others within his network, juxtaposed alongside the limited, and heavily controlled, consultation and involvement reserved for the majority of those with a stake in the sector, including social workers and those with experience of services. These issues are explored extensively elsewhere (see: Dickson, 2021; Jones, 2021; Willow, 2021).

Expanding leadership training

The MacAlister review recommended continued investment in leadership programmes ‘at every level’ (p.192). Frontline has been framed as a leadership development programme from its inception, and Frontline recently expanded into providing leadership-focused CPD to both social work managers, through their DfE-funded Firstline programme, and heads of services, through their more recently launched Headline programme (Hidayat, 2021). Therefore, it was difficult to read this recommendation as not including a heavy endorsement of continued public funding for Frontline and its proliferation of spin off schemes. Indeed, just two months after the MacAlister Review was published, a new £7m contract for social work leadership CPD was awarded to Frontline, amalgamating and expanding their current programmes of Headline and Firstline under a combined ‘Pathways’ programme, in a move that also removed funding from a number of CPD programmes that otherwise may have been considered competitors to Frontline (Samuel, 2022a). Therefore, as with Teach First in education, Frontline now has a major role in both qualifying and CPD training for social workers.

Early Career Framework

Another proposal in the MacAlister Review was for a new Early Career Framework (ECF) in social work. This proposal was explicitly based on the recently introduced ECF for teachers, a model promoted by the EEF, part of the What Works Network discussed above (McAlister, 2022). However, an increasing number of studies are finding that far from having a positive impact on

the profession, the ECF is having significant negative impacts on teachers and their mentors. This includes a TeacherTapp study finding that four in five teachers and mentors felt that the ECF training they received was not well-designed and just one in ten feeling it was a good use of time (Ford et al., 2022). These resonate with findings presented in Chapter 1 of this book that show only 7 per cent of teachers think the ECF makes a positive difference, with concerns ranging from the training being ‘hit and miss’ to those who feel it will deter new teachers from joining the profession. Despite these issues the MacAlister Review not only recommends replicating the ECF in social work but expanding it from two to five years (MacAlister, 2022), and the government have confirmed they are taking these plans forward (Department for Education, 2023). In order to understand why the ECF in teaching was such a prominent recommendation in MacAlister’s Review, it is also worth noting that the six lead providers for the ECF in teaching include Teach First, where MacAlister was trained, Ambition Institute, where MacAlister’s husband was formerly CEO, and Capita, who are a ‘gold’ partner of Teach First (Department for Education, 2022). Once again, this suggests the prominent role of networks in shaping policy across social work and education.

National evaluation of qualifying providers

The MacAlister Review also proposed an evaluation of ‘quality’ in all initial social work education routes, notably exempting Frontline on the basis that it has already been subject to evaluation (MacAlister, 2022: 184). The review made no mention of the myriad issues raised in those previous evaluations or in the growing body of additional research and evidence demonstrating the damaging impact that Frontline is having on the profession (Murphy, 2016; Jones, 2019; Tunstill, 2019; Scourfield et al., 2020, 2021; Hanley, 2022a). While there is minimal detail about what such an evaluation of initial social work education routes could look like, we note that this recommendation comes at a time when the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Market Review looks set to shrink the number of ITT programmes by 25 per cent, just as the profession is facing a deepening recruitment crisis (Martin, 2022). Amidst this turmoil, Teach First, an organization with an explicit early remit to improve recruitment and retention in teaching, has secured a contract to

act as an ITT Market Quality Associate to support the ‘anticipated closure’ of many ITT providers (Whittaker, 2022).

Considering the way Frontline is framed in the MacAlister Review, it is reasonable to expect that they would see themselves as having a similarly advantageous role stemming from any review of this kind in social work. Significantly, in a November 2022 parliamentary debate on the MacAlister Review, Conservative MP and former Children’s Minister Edward Timpson reiterated calls for this evaluation of initial social work education, alongside praising Frontline, something he has consistently done since it was founded (Samuel, 2022b). From a network perspective, it is noteworthy that Timpson’s father, Sir John Timpson, acts as a trustee of Frontline and has recently announced that the charitable trust he chairs will be sponsoring the first annual ‘Frontline Awards’ to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Frontline’s founding (Samuel, 2022c).

What works merger

The MacAlister Review also recommended the merger of several What Works Network partners, starting with the EIF and WWCS and eventually including other What Works organizations, including the EEF (MacAlister, 2022). This is justified in the review based on the need for these organizations to have a ‘more meaningful’ role across children’s services, and would come with a vastly expanded remit (p. 202). The first merger proposed, of the EIF and WWCS, was announced to be going forward on the same day that the MacAlister Review was published, and subsequently, MacAlister was appointed as executive chair of that newly amalgamated organization (EIF, 2022). It is also worth noting that when Frontline were awarded the new £7m CPD leadership contract described above, WWCS were announced as a delivery partner, meaning MacAlister will likely continue to have some direct influence in his previous organization as well (Samuel, 2022a).

‘What’s wrong with networks?’

A key rebuttal by critics of the network mapping we have previously been involved in (Hanley et al., 2021) has been to ask, in various ways, the essential question: What is so wrong with like-minded

people and organizations coalescing around ideas and policy moves that stand to benefit people? This is often attended by claims that these ideas and moves are supported by evidence, which, as set out above, are at least questionable, if not downright spurious, alongside emotive appeals to the notion that those involved are motivated only by a desire to do the right thing by children and families. From this, a seductive narrative emerges: reformists are ‘progressives’ seeking ‘radical change’ of sclerotic, outmoded systems; those who challenge them are ‘regressives’ wedded to their over-regulated and bureaucratic ways of working and standing in the way of much-needed reform. This is just one way in which *hegemony* can be seen operating in the creation, maintenance and expansion of these networks, and it is to this concept we now turn in order to set out why the concentration of influence within these networks is so problematic.

Neoliberal hegemony

Writing from his prison cell under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, the Italian communist and philosopher Antonio Gramsci extended Karl Marx’s and Friedrich Engels’ ideas that the power of dominant groups rested not only on the exploitation of weaker ones but on the dominance of ruling class ideas and values, which become accepted as normative (Gramsci, 1971). A key effect of the prevalence of such apparently normative ideologies was what Engels called the ‘false consciousness’ of the lower, working, classes that kept them from recognizing and rejecting their oppression (Engels, 1893). Critiques of ‘false consciousness’ rightly point to its use as justification for political indoctrination under oppressive Communist regimes (Lewy, 2017) but the basic idea that without critical awareness of the ideological forces shaping society and the lives of people in it we come to accept this social order as *just the way things are* resonates beyond the ideological confines of Marx and Engels’ theories.

Hegemonic power differs from overt, dictatorial power because to work it relies on the consent of those subject to it. Gramsci (1971) described how this consent is manufactured via the reproduction of dominant groups’ ideological beliefs within culture and society, through, for example, the media, schools, universities and other

institutions, so that they come to appear as common sense and normal. The capture and control of the media and other institutions by hegemonic forces is key to the reinforcement of the ideas and values of dominant groups and the continued manufacturing of consent.

It is therefore important to explore who are these dominant groups and what ideologies they inculcate in society. We have written extensively about the recent history of reform of children services, locating this within the wider advancement of neoliberalism in late phase capitalist societies, such as the UK and US (Kerr, 2020; McGrath-Brookes et al., 2021; Hanley, 2022b). For the purpose of this discussion, neoliberalism refers to both the prevailing economic model in Western democracies and the ideas and assumptions – about the function and value of markets, and of people and the societies they live in – that underpin and serve that model (Giroux, 2004; Kerr, 2020).

Many of the assumptions underpinning the neoliberal conception of society are, in fact, deeply contested ideas masquerading as common sense. The key underpinning idea of neoliberalism as an economic model is that a marketplace, with little or no regulation, is the ideal system to meet the needs of individuals, and the communities and nations in which they live. This is the fundamental myth that drives the privatization and marketization of public services. Marketization is good, so the myth goes, because it encourages competition which has the effect of raising quality and lowering the cost to the end user. While this might work for tinned tomatoes and high street fashion (though often at considerable cost to the rights and welfare of those involved in manufacturing processes) it is a myth that these principles when applied to, say, education and social policy, yield similar results. Even the International Monetary Fund has declared that neoliberalism has failed to deliver on its own terms (Ostry et al., 2016).

However, [neoliberalism] is not simply an economic policy designed to cut government spending, pursue free-trade policies, and free market forces from government regulations; it is also a political philosophy and ideology that affects every dimension of social life' (Giroux, 2004: 52). It is therefore appropriate to describe the global domination of the ideology of neoliberalism in Gramscian terms (Schwarzmantel, 2005). Neoliberalism is the way of looking at the world and the people in it that paves the way for such things as privatization and marketization in education, health

and social support services. This is what makes it so pervasive, and so dangerous. It is a permeating worldview – a seductive set of ideas and reflexes, remarkably efficient at spreading, replicating and adapting itself to just about any context (Giroux, 2004; Kerr, 2020). Neoliberalism derives its power from its ability to enlist, co-opt and colonize other ideas – even those from seemingly divergent political standpoints – in order to consolidate its dominant position. These include ideas that shape and inform public policy.

At its core, neoliberal ideology can therefore be summed up thus:

- a) citizens are consumers and producers,
- b) the wellbeing of individual citizens is important only insofar as to the degree it impacts on their contribution (their productivity and their consumption of goods),
- c) individuals are, ultimately, responsible for their own wellbeing, and
- d) any support provided to ease suffering will be aimed at correcting deficits/defects within the individuals themselves.

Once you start unpicking these components, you begin to see how the ideological component of neoliberalism operates to regulate and control the populace with the key aim of servicing the needs and predilections of those benefitting most from the neoliberal economic model. At the core of this conception of the world is the idea that the individual is all, and that society must be geared toward rewarding those able to capitalize on their individual agency. This idea that we can all be ‘entrepreneurial selves’ is the myth we are sold in the service of the neoliberal (and patriarchal) hegemony (Pollack and Rossiter, 2010; Jacobs, 2020; Carmo et al., 2021). In reality, this is only possible for those with the ability to capitalize on their agency in the world, which, in vastly unequal Western capitalist societies (Carmo et al., 2021), is largely contingent on social circumstances and the unequal distribution of opportunities.

Doing Well by Doing Good

This notion of the entrepreneurial self is of particular relevance to neoliberal hegemony as it relates to the reform of education and children’s social care, and the education and training of teachers and

social workers. As was already discussed, Frontline was founded by Teach First ambassador Josh MacAlister, with the support of key political allies including Andrew Adonis and Michael Gove. However, the extent of the support MacAlister received in setting up and subsequently expanding Frontline is more far reaching, the history of which is an example of how global big businesses seek to influence public policy and reshape it according to their own ideological leanings.

Both Teach First and Frontline receive donations from a plethora of private organizations, including many in the financial sector (Murphy, 2016; Kerr, 2020; Hanley, 2022b). Some notable examples include CitiGroup, Credit Suisse, Boston Consulting Group, Barclays and KPMG. These donations help them to not only provide their core qualifying training programmes, but also to extend and strengthen their influence in other areas, in particular social policy. There are valid concerns then that Frontline and Teach First, in enmeshing themselves in the web of the big money global connectivity, are key players in the advancement of neoliberal hegemony in children's services. As an illustrative example of this, the global management consultancy firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was a founding partner of Frontline, and has been consistently represented on Frontline's board since its inception (Owens et al., 2014). Josh MacAlister has continued a close relationship with BCG in other ways, including co-authoring with BCG a 'blueprint' for fundamentally changing the children's social care system just one year prior to being appointed to chair the MacAlister Review (MacAlister et al., 2019).

Through the likes of Teach First and Frontline big businesses can position themselves as ethical actors fit to intervene in the lives of people in vulnerable situations throughout the world. They do this under the banners of what they somewhat euphemistically call 'corporate social responsibility' or 'corporate statesmanship' (Reeves et al., 2018). These are forms of philanthropic activity by elite financial organizations predicated on the myth that it is possible for these organizations to 'do well by doing good'. The inherent paradox of this myth should be obvious. 'Doing well by doing good' essentially means profiting from social disadvantage. To do that, a business needs a replenishing stock of socially disadvantaged people, and eradicating social disadvantage therefore becomes bad for business. There is no sustainable business model in the world

built on the premise of self-defeat, demonstrable through the total lack of attention paid by ‘socially responsible’ corporations in tackling social problems at structural level (Flaherty, 2016; Giridharadas, 2019). Corporate philanthropy rests on the lie that you can get rich while helping the poor when in fact the aim and the result are to keep the poor exactly where the rich need them. Saviours need people to save. This ideological positioning can also be seen in the approach these organizations take to the individual professionals, in particular promoting ‘micro-philanthropy’, and it is to this concept this chapter now turns.

Micro-philanthropy

Frontline’s approach and justification is underpinned by the same flawed premise as Teach First: that tackling social inequality rests on the potential of society’s most talented individuals, dubbed ‘the best and brightest’ (Hanley, 2021: 504). Moreover, it is seen to be possible for these ‘leaders’ to do so while also advancing their own careers and interests, which as noted above can be considered a form of ‘micro-philanthropy’ (Duggan, 2017: 135). This involves candidates being cast as selflessly forgoing (usually only for a couple of years) high-status/high-paying roles in areas like banking, politics and tech to help the less fortunate by becoming teachers or social workers, roles that they can therefore use to demonstrate characteristics like resilience and problem solving on future job applications. This idea is prominent in the marketing for these organizations, and even the name of Teach *First* evokes the idea of using teaching as a short-term experience builder before moving on (Duggan, 2017; Hanley, 2021). A prominent example of this in action is Josh MacAlister himself, who left his teaching job shortly after starting it to use his political and business connections, facilitated through his time at Teach First, to found Frontline (MacAlister, 2012). For these reasons Frontline and Teach First are both marketed as leadership development programmes, rather than professional development programmes (Duggan, 2017). There are even built in mechanisms and partnerships to facilitate these career moves. For example, graduates of Frontline and Teach First are favoured when applying to the civil service’s own fast-track scheme, Fast Stream (UK Government, n.d.).

Frontline and Teach First can therefore be seen as marketed to ambitious, high-achieving graduates as a stepping stone to other careers, perpetuating chronic recruitment and retention issues within the profession (Gupta & SocialWhatNow, 2018). Graduates of these programmes have been particularly effective in pursuing careers that place them in influential policymaking positions. This is borne out by our network mapping project, which as noted above shows that Teach First and Frontline are the most connected and therefore arguably the most influential organizations within their respective fields (Hanley et al., 2021). This serves to further consolidate the power of elite groups while also ensuring that these schemes continue to be favoured by the government of the day. The more this happens, the more normal and common sense it appears, and challenge to this hegemonic order is thereby increasingly framed as both abhorrent and an aberration. The neoliberal order has time only for people and ideas that accord with its own, individualistic, view of the world, and in particular rejects structural analyses (which expose neoliberalism's inherent failings, contradictions and paradoxes) and any suggestion that social ills are rooted in the inequalities on which the neoliberal edifice is built.

Conclusion

By identifying and exploring several similar and parallel policy developments across social work and education, including those perpetuated and extended by the recent MacAlister Review, we have shown how the same game, played by the same players, in the different but related fields of social work and education is, in both form and effect, the advancement of hegemonic control within children's services, broadly speaking, and that the key ideological component of this hegemony is neoliberalism. It is of serious concern that the recent developments in education the MacAlister Review proposes repeating in social work, such as the ECF and the ITE Market Review, have not improved the state of teacher education in England, but have in fact contributed to the DfE missing their secondary teacher recruitment target for 2022 by over 40 per cent (Walker, 2022). Therefore, if these recommendations, and the policy network behind them, are allowed to continue unabated, social work should expect in the coming years similarly disastrous impacts to

compound and exacerbate the existing, ongoing challenges facing the profession set out at the start of this chapter.

At the level of practice, the effect of this hegemonic control in both professions has been to create, promote and embed technicized forms of social work and teaching. This has involved the stripping out or recasting of their social justice missions and politically radical elements to align them with highly individualistic approaches predicated on selectively prescribed skill sets and behaviour modification interventions. As suggested within the discussions in this chapter on ‘doing well by doing good’ and micro-philanthropy, these new, narrowed conceptions of professional roles emerge as micro-level iterations of macro-level ‘social impact’ activities of global corporations seeking to advance neoliberal conceptions of the ‘entrepreneurial self’ as the answer to complex social issues. Through Frontline, Teach First and similar elite-targeting graduate programmes, global big money has, with the help of powerful political allies, extended neoliberal ideology into our public services through hegemonic control. The chapters in this book set out in detail the negative impact of this control on our respective professions and, crucially, on the people our professions support. The paradoxical conceit of ‘doing well by doing good’ may indeed have achieved the ‘well’ but it has demonstrably failed to achieve a commensurate level of ‘good’.

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