

The Moral Economy of England's School-Centred Initial Teacher Training - Exploring the Voices of Bourgeois Elites

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“The place of educational theory in teacher education, and the institutional infrastructure that supports it, are in serious jeopardy. If there is a case to be made in their defence, it must be made now, and made compellingly”ⁱ

Abstract

The focus of the analysis highlights the social world conjured by school inspectorate quality assurance accounts of ITT contemporary provision. These documentary sources manifest moral economies conjured through buzzwords and anodyne description illustrative of how a school-led system of ITT is valorised. The school inspectorate inspection values are tantamount to its role in the administration of a moral economy organised to ensure the student teacher is compliant in support of capitalist production. That induction is shaped by the politics governing school and university ITT partnerships where the latter's positionality is, now, much reduced. The ITT investigated is known as School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT). SCITTs are governed through partnership agreements with the Department for Education (DfE) which prescribes a statutory Core Curriculum Framework (CCF). The CCF performative enunciations import the capitalist corporate sector of the British economy into ITT. Borrowing E.P. Thompson's concept of 'moral economy' we found continuity of critique values with earlier traditions of teacher professionalism associated with educator Lawrence Stenhouse

(1926-1982). His values were equally oppositional to compliance mentalities of submissive shallowness policed by suspect leadership and mentoring mantras. Empirically, we foreground our qualitative analysis of government inspection reports about SCITTs as a thematic analysis. The data include a stratified sample of providers of ITT in England. These data 'from above' elide the student voice. Such secondary data is available through the public website of the DfE. The neo-liberal moral economy encourages the socio-cultural production of a moral economy conveyed to others by teachers. As they are proletarianized by ITT this education system alignment will therefore encourage in classrooms the "spirit of capitalism" amongst school pupils.

Keywords: *Discourse, moral-economy, teacher training, neoliberal, England*

Background

We propose in the article that student teachers undergoing contemporary ITT are indoctrinated by a corporate fetish producing political mindsets favoured by England's capitalist elites, the regime associated with the British Conservative political party, in particular. Elites in this article are defined as those with privileged power and dominance over the ruled. The dominance is achieved through political values that give it legitimation (Mayhew, 2023).

An acute shortfall in recruitment into ITT in England informed and mobilised policy about the need for a school-led ITT fast-track (The Guardian, 2022).

International evidence highlighted the high attrition rates of new teachers, stressing the relevance of the role of the school environment in teacher retention (McNulty et al., 2010). The quality of beginning teacher education provision influences attrition rates among beginning teachers, faster induction processes may mitigate such losses (Hanušová et al., 2020). The article exposes through a

moral economy position how bourgeoisie inspectorate elites utilise reporting regimes to construct alternative, faster track induction route, into school teaching.

Max Weber's "the spirit of capitalism" ideological theory emphasis is that such a "spirit" co-opts people's commitment to capitalism by making it seem compellingly attractive at the cost of neutralising creativity and undermining autonomy (Souyri, 2014; Vujovic et al 2022). The micro world of education mirrors the needs of capital and rewards submission to it (Ruuska, 2023). We examine the ways in which this moral economy is policed and enforced by an elite involved with control over teacher training regimes. Initial teacher training (ITT) policy in England and beyond has dramatically changed over the past twenty-five years (Jackson et al., 2016). ITT rather than the earlier more academic terminology, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) symbolises socialisation that is delivered in terms of training, skills and competency mentalities (Helgetun & Menter, 2020). An earlier educational zeitgeist championed the ideas of educationalist Lawrence Stenhouse whose model of teacher development and empowerment remains a counterpoint to contemporary technocratic thinking in education, that we suggest, positions student teachers as servile (Elliot et al., 2012; Humes, 2024).

Ellis et al (2024) employ the nomenclature of teacher education undergoing a new political economy combining the enterprise narrative with the shadow state proposing such free-market policies impact the US, England and Norway education systems. Shadow states control markets and choices for many areas of life including forms of teacher education (Tatto et al, 2025) Nowadays, there is a complex marketized landscape of different partnership routes into teaching in England as well as a variety of provider funding policies. The SCITT model, dominant in school-led ITT, emerged from landmark education reforms of Labour and Conservative governments over the 1990s. It is based on the premise that traditional lecture-based ITE and cognate academic framings provided by

universities were inadequate and irrelevant to their envisioned neo-marketized model of teacher performativity. Rubin et al (2023) on the contrary argue education systems are part of a collectivist society promoting the socialisation of children into humanistic values and norms. Unless teachers are encouraged to become critical intellectuals their pedagogy risks unquestioned support to favoured ideologies and as a profession de-skilled (Giroux, 1988; Lois, 1989).

Moral economy

This article frames student socialisation as inclining towards indoctrination in terms of the concept of neoliberal capitalism, a 'moral economy' enunciated through training regimes within ITT systems of provision. Secreted inside current ITT practice is a neoliberal moral economy which means its emphasis on skills will potentially nurture a compliant proletarian profession.

Neoliberalism has three manifestations, ideology, mode of governance and policy package, dimension examined in the article (Garner, 2016). We view moral economy as an interpretative tool to shed light on the continuities between past treatments of education's role in teacher development and the ITE status quo in the present. ITT's established political power occludes alternative emancipatory narratives as it prescribes under the hegemonic auspices of a statutory compliance regime. Besides the CCF subjecting ITT providers to statutory compliance it encourages further hegemonic oversight by means of quantitative randomised control trials research championed by the Education Endowment Foundation-EEF (Department for Education, 2019, 2). The EEF positions itself as an independent charity. The EEF was founded in 2011 through an endowment of £125 million from England's Department for Education and is renowned for its 'what works' evidence synthesis, a moral economy of pragmatism. The adoption of RCT methodologies to evaluate

interventions imposes the guise of scientific objectivity that stifles debate about the fundamentally contested nature of educational ideals (Dawson et al., 2018). Ibrahim (2014) also uses the moral economy concept as an analytic tool for theorising the moral antagonism towards free market reform impacting university access. These policy changes in the more recent British coalition government's education policy reforms are conceptualised by Ibrahim as assaults on the moral economy, understood as free access for all to higher education. Marxist education scholars propose education reflects the surrounding capitalist society and thus produces unequal outcomes. Education in this mould is a process of capitalist subjection to an ideology of indoctrination (Ruuska, 2023). Ibrahim in his ethnography of university student revolt over higher education tuition fees at the University of Manchester foregrounds the moral economy as an analytic tool highlighting how from a moral economy perspective a sense of injustice fuelled this student revolt. Neoliberalism as market competition, entrepreneurship and capital accumulation is demonstrably pertinent to interpreting social interactions beyond the narrowly conceptualised economic sphere (Atkinson et al., 2020). Adams et al. (2019) argue that psychological science developed within an ideology of capitalism and inevitably reproduces a moral economy privileging individual growth and individualistic moral self-regulation. Thompson (1971) instead foregrounds the concept 'moral economy' to characterize collectivist values and human aspirations as opposed to grasping individualism. The dominant moral economy zeitgeist is continuous with neoliberal trends identified by Henry Giroux and colleagues during the 1980s. The current ITT orientation, we suggest as they also recognised back then subverts and marginalises the role of academia and intellectual theorising associated with a university's contribution to teacher education (Giroux, 1988; Morito, 2019). The narratives adumbrated in SCITT report registers are indicative of the continuity of an international moral economy in opposition to Lawrence

Stenhouse's and others politically liberating model of the teacher-as-critical thinker and researcher. Reviewing Stenhouse Lo Mun Ling (2013) argues he fought to encourage schools to develop educational practices with no "right answers" that were emancipatory. In Table One we list our sample of teacher training providers in England and the schools within them from which the inspection data reported below in Table 2 and as themes are extracted. We compare ITT providers to companies whose moral economy 'business model' is teacher production.

Table 1

Sample of ITT providers (SCITT)

SCITT brands		Placement School/s Inspected
Astra		Dr Challoner's Grammar School
Bluecoat Alliance Nottingham		Bluecoat Academy (and others)
Bromley Schools Collegiate		Hayes School
Cheshire East		Holmes Chapel Comprehensive
Chiltern Training Group		Challney High School for Boys
Compton		The Compton School
Cornwall School		Truro and Penwith College
Fareham and Gosport Primary		Harrison Primary School
George Spencer Academy		George Spencer Academy
Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership		Gloucestershire schools
Inspiring Leaders Teacher Training		Diverse schools, Leicestershire
Manchester Nexus		The Blue Coat School
North Lincolnshire Partnership		Diversity of schools in Lincolnshire
North Tyneside		North Tyneside schools
Oxfordshire Teacher Training		Oxfordshire schools
Pennine Lancashire		Diversity of schools

The SCITT documents analysed later in the article illustrate discursive strategies that we hypothesised earlier subjugate training schools and students to capitalism's moral economy. The English inspectorate's autonomy is limited by a statutory framework of performative evaluations of ITT. In Table 2 and through the thematic sub-sections we construct the nature of business compliant moral economy in the ITT nexus. The school inspectorate, in this regime, are agents working on behalf of the capitalist state. Stenhouse's educative philosophy constructs "education as essentially a theory of teacher professionalism, autonomy and development" (Skilbeck, 1983, 12). Stenhouse's intellectual affinities are witnessed in the contents of the education courses he developed for schoolteachers during his period of employment as a university lecturer. That intellectual milieu included eminent philosophers and sociologists Karl Popper, Max Weber, G.H. Mead and Richard Hoggart. Hoggart's *'The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life'*, published in 1957 provided fresh insight into English working-class and popular cultures 'from below' (Norris, 2012). Our research question is: in what ways does the inspectorates' appraisal of ITT cultivate a moral economy which endorses instrumentalist cultures of pedagogic and moral efficiency?

Emasculating Initial teacher education

Sheila Lawlor, founder of right-wing think-tank *Politeia* is a life peer. That status was recommended by the British Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnston in 2022. Lawlor (1990) activist and Cambridge scholar argued in her radical pamphlet *Teachers Mistaught*, a politically right-leaning publication for the disbandment of the role of university organised models of ITT. This critical policy zeitgeist has exponentially sedimented into school-led managerialist SCITT doctrines and technocratic approaches. The British Conservative party policies reduced the role of universities in ITT, making them more dependent

upon schools (Foster, 1999; Yamazaki, 2017). The term ITT has been the favoured term of government since that period. It is only once competitive bidding to government for training places is finalised ITT places are allocated. This funding does not go directly to universities; schools must work with an accredited ITT provider, often a university, which is important for the course validation (Jackson et al., 2016, 512).

Ball (2003, 1995) argues the instrumentalist moral economy is associated with a marketized landscape of performativity and managerialism. It is against this English ITT policy context that our theorisation is situated and developed. The article contributes to the recognition that moral economy of education studies in academia that was being ghosted over the 1980s has now reached its instrumentalist height in recent school-based forms of teacher preparation.

Lawn and Furlong (2009, 546) describe the demise of academic treatments of education by reference to the education informing disciplines sociology, psychology, philosophy and history as having been pushed out by the Conservative policy context hostile to academic intellectualism. Moreover, that intellectual moral economy that pursued understanding of the social worlds within and outside of education has been superseded by a policy emphasis on 'standards' and competences in ITE with its 'turn to the practical'.

The article critically examines the SCITT mode of ITT delivery and by implication government policy values. Our contribution does not lie with appraisal of individual SCITTs. Their very existence does reinforce the historical continuity adumbrated by Furlong et al (2009) in their discursive account of the declining fortunes of education studies and teacher preparation. Spendlove (2024, 44) in that vein sees the perceived crises in ITT in England as associated with the British Conservative government's (2010-2024) education policies, which constructs beginning teachers through the model of industrial human resource management in the private sector. A professionalized workforce was then judged through a performativity and output measurement

paradigm (Helgetun & Menter, 2020). The putative shortcomings of previous ITT in England, as signalled by Sheila Lawlor have been laid at the door of ‘out of touch’ university education departments. Contrary to that questionable moral economy policy hypothesis Barry (2026) recently demonstrated that the marginalisation of educational thought in teacher education in England in fact de-professionalizes teachers.

Scientific references in the CCF policy document pivot ITT alignment with politically buzzword psychological tropes about learning processes, mental retrieval, retention, cognitive load and working memory. Sociological critiques that illuminate cultures of inequality and underachievement are absent from the CCF. In the CCF document we find journal citations illustrate the science of individualism, *Trends in Cognitive Science*, and *Educational Psychology Review* import conservative individualism. In Table 2 below we illustrate how that landscape reverberates through a linguistic importation of commercial business psychology. The positionalities of those consulted by the CCF network are themselves members of a right wing of the British political spectrum, John Blake, for instance, is associated with fast routes into teaching *Now Teach* and *Ark*. *Ark* includes the trustees were eminent in business worlds, Lord Fink who was a former hedge fund manager and Tina Alexandrou whose own career was in banking including posts in a prestigious commercial sector, KPMG, J. P. Rothchild and HSBC. Elite figures from this ‘deep state’ aided the think-tank’s *Politeia* journal to develop a partnership with Lawlor. In the next section how this pollical world plays out in language choices is captured by the content choice by ITT inspectors whose inspection phraseology obfuscates actual processes of teacher preparation.

Methodology

The Making of the English Working Class a book by E.P. Thompson, the Marxist (*New Left*) social historian, published in 1963, inspired a methodological approach to the analysis of primary source documents known as history 'from below', a mayor element in political sociology (Fahrni, 2013). Our data source is, by contrast, a history 'from above'. The 'voice' in our case is officialdom; government or shadow state enterprises in networks of power surrounding, in this context, institutions based in London's elite Whitehall postcodes. The moral economy, for Thompson, is in opposition to market capitalism's technocratic push. Government inspectorate employees are the appointed elites tasked with monitoring and enforcing the culture of England's School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT).

SCITT is a major alternative and fast route into school teaching introduced in 1993. In 2021-2022 there were 165 of these ITT providers in England (Hulme et al., 2023,1376). Culture is a web of meaning (Geertz,1973). The task of a qualitative researcher is to interpretate written texts as they embody culture (Ringer, 1998; Platt, 1985). Language and social power coalesce (Bacon & So Yoon, 2018, 11). Our data was selected from published inspection outputs over the period 2022 and 2023. Groups of inspectors visit for 2-3 days to each SCITT provider. Such Ofsted and HMI inspectorate's evaluations are published online.ⁱⁱ In Table 2 we see a linguistic registrar of business psychology.

Orchard and Winch (2015, 43) reflect that the practice-based school-led system of ITT developed in opposition to the intellectual heritage following an ITE orientation to teacher professionalism endorsed by universities.

The article's data analysis is conjured as a thematic mapping (Wolgemuth et al., 2024). That method uncovers themes latent in the SCITT appraisals.ⁱⁱⁱ Ofsted stories about baseline assessment of school progress effect wider changes in education provision (Bradbury et al., 2017). Qualitative researchers mobilise

thematic analysis seeking meanings across texts and hidden politics (Fairclough, 2003). Fowler (1991) notes that texts embed ideological realities. The article's sampling strategy is purposive, typical of qualitative research (Devers et al., 2000). We sampled different forms of ITT provision within the SCITT cosmos in terms of their cluster size, school stage/s, geographic location and partnerships with higher education institutions. In Table 1 we set out the sample of 16 providers as the empirical background informing the article. These SCITT providers can be likened to training brands across England.

Qualitative findings

The data presented in Table 2 were selected on the grounds they are symbolic of the moral economy examined. The purpose of this tabular account is to convey the dominant phraseology congruent with the themes we discovered in this political cosmos ingrained in inspection reporting documents. The literature cited earlier about Marxism moreover draws attention to education reflecting a capitalist system. We believe therefore these data provide neoliberal constructions of teacher professionalism as the moral economy in favour. The article's approach to sharing research findings respects the ethics of qualitative research traditions (Auerbach et al., 2003). The moral economy nomenclature indicative of the capitalist affiliation of the SCITTs led ITT are illustrated by the vernacular of Table 2. SCITT cluster brands, such as Astra, are listed in Table 1. The naming terminology, we suggest, returns an ITT system to corporate discourse, which is the ITT affiliation and capitalist network. Following Fowler's (1991) argument about textual semantics the contents of Table Two offer us empirical insight into the moral economy under scrutiny in terms of the vocabulary present in inspection reports, that vocabulary characterises the current corporate ITT. The proliferation of buzz-word terminology in the term set out in Table Two below signal the ambiguity and

enigmatic commitment of ITT that drift into obfuscating business language speak disconnecting teacher socialisation from the intellectual academic allusions sketched earlier and made especially apparent by Lawn and Furlong's (2009) thorough analysis.

Table 2

Neo-liberal Tropes: Business Compliance

Trainees	Unapologetic	Steering group	Evidence base
Upskilling	Think forward	Scrupulous self-evaluation	Expert colleagues
Standard	Innovation	Ongoing cycle	Profile of mentoring
Training	continuous improvement	Ambitious improvement	Work in synergy
First-hand experience	Mechanisms	Stakeholder's voices	Enhanced training
Provider of choice	High quality	Tightly aligned	Expose trainees
Risk quality	Accurate and timely	Core content framework	Reset thinking
Essential components	Precision	Facilitators	Unequivocal agreement
Tracking and delivery	Audits	Dive deeper	'Go beyond'
Reset thinking	Compliance criteria	Partnership conformity	Provider's values
Progress steps	Great ambassadors	Training programme	Water-tight structures
Assessment checks	Assessment processes	Strategic plans	Prioritise
Hands-on	Feedback and targets	Quality assurance processes	Well-being first-aiders
Leadership	Remove barriers	Manage behaviour	Training curriculum

Buzz-wording in the contents of Table Two presents as advertising as opposed to academic analysis. These terms are designed to 'talk up' this ITT enterprise and sell it. To illustrate this corporate moral economy linguistic examples are abundant including references to "ongoing cycle", "water-tight structures", "reset thinking", "unequivocal agreement", "dive deeper", "stakeholder voices" and "remove barriers". Bacon and So Yoon (2018) note language is levered to

maintain ideological hegemony through cultural appropriation of the moral economy being privileged. Buzz-words, create a major schism between what is written and what is put into practice. They are the building blocks of the neoliberal moral economy's vernacular, in this case study they contribute to estranging ITE from the ITE moral economy characterised by intellectuals (Lawn and Furlong, 2009). Our analysis of SCITT documents is set out in terms of three dominant themes. It is helpful to view Table Two's content and textual data extracts below as an organisational change literature which instigates and supports change towards the spirit of capitalism (Cordiner et al, 2018).

Theme 1: Learning management

Table 2 represents a political landscape consistent with the pragmatism of the North American 'What works?' doctrine. It is neoliberal agenda for public service audit recognising impact that is measurable (Morrison, 2021).. It is an uncompromising doctrine operating, in our case, on the epistemological surface of teacher preparation, for example, one remark in a report claims: 'Trainees are left in no doubt that systematic synthetic phonics is the way pupils learn to decode and why fidelity to a scheme is essential' (Ofsted Fareham and Gosport Primary SCITT, 2023). It is unclear what "left in no doubt" means in substance, nor how that phonics system helps reading development nor is its contested nature recognised. This moral economy of a 'can do' and 'must do' spirit proliferates through these reports, in a different extract the system of governance praises itself: "admirable grounding" being moralising, not informative. Labelling student teachers as "trainees" symbolises the identity imputed to the incumbents of this preparation process which is designed to indoctrinate students:

Trainees get an admirable grounding in how pupils learn best...They grasp key concepts such as working memory and learn important strategies to help pupils access and embed learning...There is an unapologetic focus on upskilling all

trainees, whether primary or secondary, with the essentials of how pupils learn to read. (Astra)

We are left in the dark about how complex psychological processes of “upskilling” mean, terms such as “working memory” are highly contested in the scientific community nor is its implications for pedagogy made clear. Nor do we have insight into how these trainee’s “upskilling” will manifest. Similarly, “the essentials of how pupils learn to read” remark begs the question about the challenge. The inspectorate reports arguably annex concepts from psychology, in a pick-and-mix manner.

Borrowing stereotypic psychological concepts in these forms appears designed to legitimate or sell through science SCITT’s moral economy as respectable. This mode of administration shines through the remaining extracts within the reports that connect with this theme. The inspection behaviour described suggests the plundering of introductory text-book psychological terminology to portray credibility and in a sense the reporting regime illustrates a “hard sell” of the neoliberal (Adams et al., 2019). Ball’s (1995) ‘technicians’ illustrate agents within this moral economy as they also privilege skills and competency doctrines. Terms such as ‘dive deep’, ‘working memory’ and ‘regular training’ embed technicist socialisation into this managerialist process. The next SCITT extracts demonstrate a didactic component of this legitimisation. Doctrines typical of training and psychological legitimisation are, as stated evident in the following SCITT extracts, illustrative:

Trainees learn the ‘fundamentals’, using up-to-date thinking about how pupils learn. Opportunities to ‘dive deeper’ and ‘go beyond’ help trainees to develop and apply their practice... Trainees start by learning the essentials of behaviour management and how pupils learn. (Bluecoat)

Trainees are given many practical examples of how to manage pupils' behaviour. They successfully put these strategies into practice in their everyday teaching. Trainees regularly revisit how to support those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Primary trainees receive regular training and mentoring about how to teach pupils to read using systematic synthetic phonics. (Pennine, Lancashire)

Inspection reports describe trainees learning to 'place children at the heart of everything they do', a frame of child-centred education, but without specificity. The zeitgeist of the SCITT partnership doctrine echoes through the seemingly inclusive rubric 'Care for All' (Ofsted North Tyneside SCITT, 2023). This moral economy of intellectual cannibalism camouflages from critical view the authentic status of the student experience (Gray et al., 2010; Main et al., 2023). Foucault's micro-physics of power notion represents the granular nature of this ITT's ideological reach as a centralised political sovereignty over schools, universities, and students (McKinlay et al., 2017).

Theme 2: Human resource management

Scholars of human resource management borrow sociological theories to capture power and inequality (Tatto et al., 2025). We experience professionalism as characterised in the reports as self-aggrandising and 'no nonsense' The UK government policy *Troops into Teaching* is a response to teacher shortage and a model of professionalism as ordered skill holding the promise of re-invigorating the profession's by means of regimented practice in the classroom. As portrayed in the next extract this moral economy is hierarchic with control exercised through managerial layers, "mentors", "senior mentors", and "subject tutors". Again, the mechanisms of professional communication or collegiality are neglected, instead communication is "particularly effective". The inspectorate discourse tells readers what it wants readers to see in the preparation process and using a 'can do' valorising, for example, "Trainees

learn how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils”. The pedagogic interior to such comment is absent. Readers in this journey are then asked to be empathic in orientation as inspectors emphasise what “trainees feel...” about their training nexus. They are described as being feeling very well supported:

Trainees feel that the Bromley Schools' Collegiate is like a family. Mentors, senior mentors and subject tutors communicate particularly effectively across the provision. Trainees feel very well supported in their placement schools. They receive high levels of individual care and guidance from leaders at the centre and are very positive about their training ... Trainees learn how to adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and how to support pupils who speak English as an additional language. (Bromley Schools Collegiate)

In terms of the Cheshire East training partnership the extract illustrates that confident recommendation is foregrounded over close analysis of training. There is a lack of intellectual probing and references to cutting edge research sources. The discursive tropes in the reports are generic to human resource management speak, we are not enlightened about the nature of “strong and professional relationships” nor how, if at all, this incorporates academic scaffolding. The evidence base that “leaders are extremely committed to trainees’ wellbeing” is another of a plethora of assertive value judgements.

The strong and professional relationships that trainees forge with SCITT leaders, mentors and subject experts across this partnership are pivotal to their success. Each week, trainees engage in constructive, professional learning conversations with their subject mentors, which enable them to develop into reflective practitioners. Trainees appreciate how well leaders, subject experts and mentors listen to any worries that they may have. Leaders are extremely committed to trainees' well-being. As a result, leaders ensure that trainees have access to professional mentors who have been trained as mental health and well-being first aiders. (Cheshire East)

Lawn and Furlong's (2009) synthesis of the absence of the academic disciplines of education and a 'back to basics' moral economy is thoroughly endorsed by the void of a genuine reflective practitioner dialogue. We experience no intellectually grounded analysis in and are instead invited to connect with "professional learning conversations" standing for a professionalism reflection. At the Chiltern Training Group reference to "quality assurance" is a method for preventing student attrition. Buzzword terminology is typically evasive in terms of not enlightening us about teacher socialisation, for instance, we are told "trainees" are "carefully nurtured" and helped by "Considered communication protocols".

Trainees thrive at this partnership. Their experiences across school placements and between the three 'hubs' are remarkably consistent and of exceptional quality. Trainees' well-being is carefully nurtured. Leaders' swift responses to trainees' messages ensure trainees and mentors get the support they need. Considered communication protocols ensure that provision is tightly aligned with the trainee curriculum. All those involved know when and how it should be delivered. Multiple layers of quality assurance make it almost impossible for a trainee to miss out.
(Chiltern Training Group).

"Swift responses", "hubs", "exceptional quality", and "remarkably consistent" belong with a business lexicon. Aroles, Hassard & Hyde (2023) identify how business managerialism repositions culture as a private sector commodity; museums, for example, are commodified as the 'neoliberal museum' (Gray, 2007).

Theme 3: Moral management

Moral management emerges by means of offers of compassion and engagement: we are told trainees feel very well supported and engage in professional learning conversations with leaders, mentors and subject experts. Moral management in the SCITT inspections emerge as behavioural norms 'instilled' in situ. The

Oxfordshire Teacher Training SCITT argued its 'training programme' included values and wellbeing:

Additional core areas of 'values' and 'well-being' are an integral part of what makes this training programme such an excellent induction to the profession. There is a rightful pride in the deeply reflective ethos that is instilled in trainees. Trainees are encouraged to engage in philosophical debates in education, fostering their individual values. (Oxfordshire Teacher Training)

Triumphalism does not explain the nature of "deeply reflective ethos" reference nor processes instilling it in "trainees". This moral economy iterates verbal patronage on the providers who belong to the chosen network governed by the centre. Hints of intellectual investigation are misleading attempts to pepper the image of the SCITT as welcoming "philosophical debates in education". At the Chiltern Training Group moral purpose is described as intrinsic to training with leaders valorised 'swift' and 'strong':

Leaders skilfully design an ambitious and rigorous training curriculum that is underpinned by a strong moral purpose to provide the best quality teachers... They have the skills and insight which puts them in very good stead for swift advancement in their careers. (Chiltern Training Group)

Moralising managerialism connects also to reference to the care of trainees' mental health. In the Cheshire East SCITT leaders 'listen to any worries they may have'. Mentors are seemingly constantly accessible by trainees presenting mental health difficulties. As a corporate discourse SCITT providers are valorised as immersing themselves in being 'restless for continuous improvement', having 'strong feedback loops' and supporting 'mechanisms for ensuring and assuring quality are well embedded'. The Bluecoat SCITT trainees are lauded 'great ambassadors' indicating reputational management capital (Thompson, 2024).

Managerialist educational reforms are known to disempower and demoralise (Tsang, 2019). SCITTs mobilise, cultural, political and moral capital to project brand interest. Managing ethics in business organisations involves compliance and hierarchic alignment to a line-manager chain. Professional socialisation in the SCITT social practice environments articulate a hidden curriculum of the neoliberal, “trainees” as individuals are held personally responsible for the assimilation of privileged values aligning with ‘what works’ (Hunter & Cook, 2018, 3157; Smith, 1997).

Conclusion

In this article we re-conceptualise inspection regimes as primarily moral practices designed to transform professional preparation. Recourse to the concept moral economy sheds light upon how instrumentalist efficiency regimes are constructed by elites. That elitist doctrinaire culture is governed by prescribed hegemonic policies extending through England’s Core Curriculum Framework (CCF) regulatory bureaucracy (Hulme et al., 2023; Werfhorst, 2019). Gant (2014) characterizes neoliberalism as being a structural ideological force imposing compliant subjectivities. Stenhouse’s concept of ‘the teacher as researcher’ illustrates traditions of commitment of educational socialisation associated with critical traditions of humanism in the arts and humanities (Elliot and Norris, 2012; Skilbeck, 1983). That alternative moral economy is hazardous to capitalist thriving hence the construction of policies to limit university and other intellectualising influences (Tomlinson, 2023).

The moral economy uncovered through this article’s thematic analysis is congruent with the identity of neoliberal governmentality. This landscape also extends into the managerialist re-modelling of academia (Gasser, 2024; Saunderson, 2002). Centralised managerialism has replaced or hollowed out the traditional staffing demography of British higher education, with a proliferation

of non-academic governed elites evidencing the emergence in the UK of a radically different higher education moral economy (Wolf & Jenkins, 2021). A return to the traditionalist moral economy that we find in the work of Lawrence Stenhouse and university partnerships models may no longer be an option in England now that higher education has become highly marketized, competitively ranked and audit governed. Madigan et al. (2021) reflect that schoolteachers' attrition rates are alarming relative to other professions, reflecting burnout and low job satisfaction (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Centralising policy doctrines by the last Conservative government favouring the school-led model of ITT were arguably aimed at ensuring that its value position on schooling and teacher qualities evaded scrutiny by university intellectual milieux antagonistic to capitalism. Jerome and Brook (2020) in their critique of British government ITT policy allude to professional standards as affording minimum competences that new entrants to the profession must achieve to merit Qualified Teacher status. They argue the mentoring standards component of ITT is impoverished, leading the teaching profession towards a technicist account of the role of the student mentor. Brooks (2006), examining the impact of a government shift to the use of training schools over partnership models with higher education providers, comments that it curtails the dominance of universities throughout England.

Within an earlier period of the UK's coalition government (2010-2015), radical policy action was undertaken to change the superstructure of ITT in terms of how providers of ITT were validated and funded, prescribed inspection regime was there to adjudicate. This model of conditional professional socialisation that limited the power of universities are grounds for concluding that ITT for the 35,000+ new teachers each year ensures they will experience a pedagogical 'moral turn' (DfE, 2022). The 2011 implementation plan *Training our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers* (Department for Education, 2011) introduced a *School Direct* route into teaching and, along with this, the

expectation that teachers trained through School Direct would go on to work in the schools where they had trained. Nick Gibb – a former Conservative party education minister - argued for the need to raise the professionalism of teachers and national educational standards through – in his terms -liberating teachers in England from dependency on universities (Gibb, 2014).

This article's contribution lies in the adoption of the concept 'moral economy' to characterise a neo-liberal, business-inspired model of ITT differentiated from academia and traditions of intellectually critical scaffolding. Historical continuities with earlier critiques about the decline of academic cultures in teacher preparation resonate with this article's findings. The reported leveraging of psychological knowledge and business elite networks into the development of ITT encourages its coalescing with corporate business cultures. Trainee teachers positioned in SCITTs are exposed to a moral economy that reproduces the cultural and political capital of England's neo-liberal political zeitgeist. The socialisation of recruits through this ITT model can also be seen through the optics of socio-economic changes impacting occupational cultures generally (Fielding, 2018). Even the micro-managerialist agency that Ofsted and HMI assert through their selective language usage found in their inspection reports is enabling of the secretion of a trojan horse of socio-political affiliations into processes of professional formation that are recognisably neo-liberal (Ortlieb & Ressi, 2022; Said & Zhu, 2019). E.P. Thompson confronted sociological dislocations caused by industrial capitalism believing economics was essentially a moral discipline that involved ethics and sense of community. Finally, the discursive exploration presented in our article about ITT offers contributions towards a critical examination of wider discourses about 'teacher quality' and governmentality, themes whose resonance continues (Peters et al, 2021).

Notes

ⁱ Orchard and Winch (2015)

ⁱⁱ Search - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/initial-teacher-education-inspections-and-outcomes>. Downloaded 30/01/2024.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

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