

# The Brave New world of Teaching. Implications for unions and workers

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# Theme and Questions

- Changes in the work environment and job demands.
  - Are these changes a simple result of efforts to improve the quality of education, return to balanced budgets or is there a larger agenda ?
  - In what way do these changes challenge union representation ?
  - What can be done from a teaching-team point of view ? From a union perspective ?



# Argument

- Neoliberalism has found a new and perhaps stronger basis following the GFC.
- It can be thought of as the belief that markets and individual initiatives lead to superior results, both economic and social, than collective action or State intervention.
- In public services: austerity measures, increased demands and New Public Management

# Neoliberalism and public sector

<b>Service delivery</b>	<b>Management</b>
Cost controls and reductions; Limit resource allocation; Non governmental providers; Subcontracting; Competition; Devolution but little real autonomy;	Performance Control and Measurements; Individualisation; Social control and discipline; Evaluate and be evaluated; Stimulate competition within and without;

# Work and employment

Collective Bargaining	Work Relations
<p>Coercive and Hard Bargain Stance;</p> <p>Keep unions out of the workplace;</p> <p>Keep unions but weaken them;</p>	<p>Work intensification and densification;</p> <p>Precariousness;</p> <p>Profesionalisation but limited autonomy;</p> <p>Attempt to create microcorporatist logic among staff (us against them);</p>

# In Schools

- More demanding work: quantitative and qualitative;
- Success rates and performance plans used to discipline staff;
- Attempts to limit teacher autonomy and questioning competencies;
- Competition between schools (special programmes, events, marketing, ....)

# In Schools

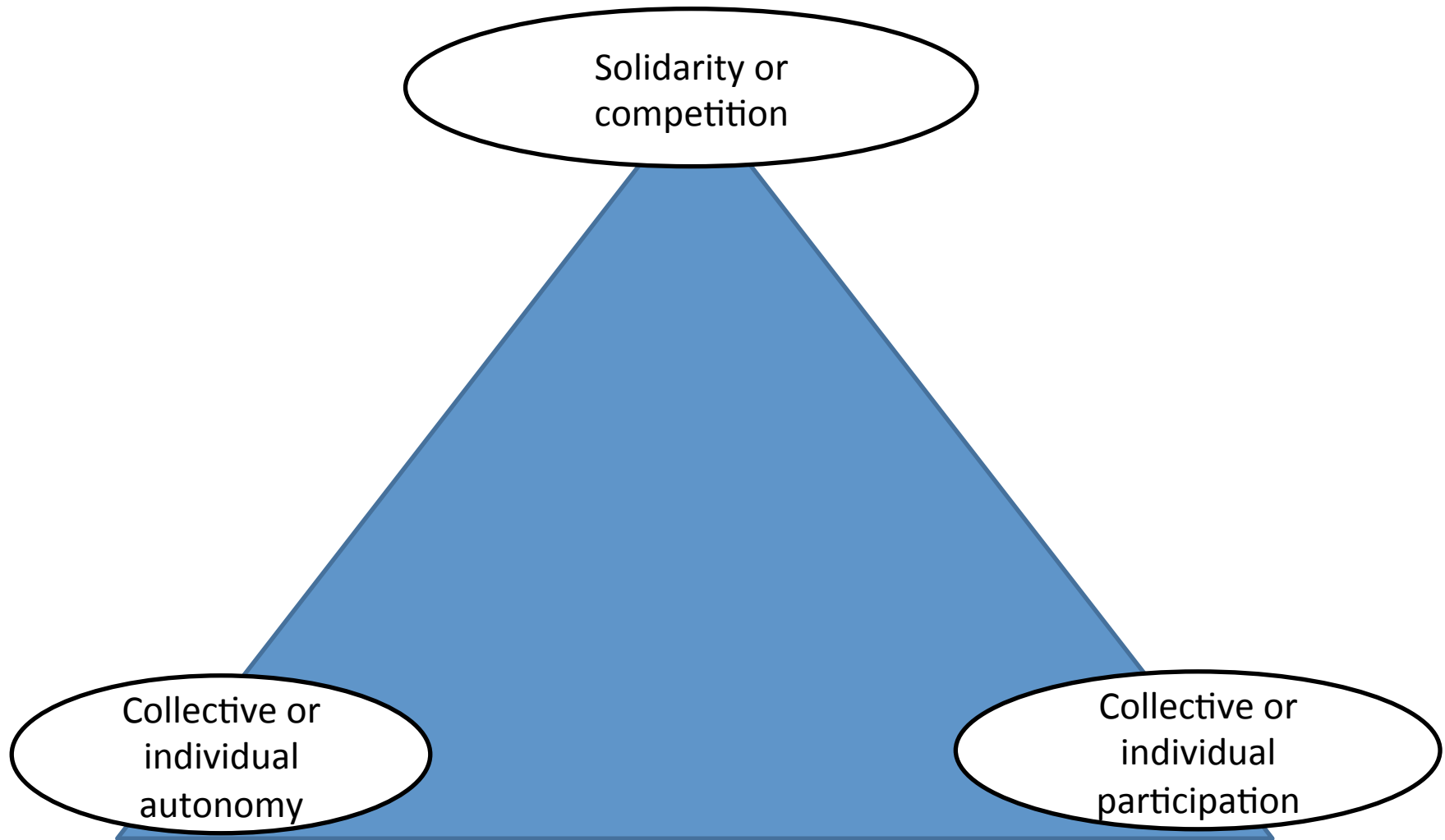
- Management attempt to control worker participation schemes:
  - Various committees;
  - Create tensions among teachers and act as ultimate arbitrator;
  - Use outside stakeholders to draw more free labour out of teachers and other staff;



# Responses

Individual	Work group / School/ local	Union
<p>Voluntary work time reductions;</p> <p>Individual bargaining;</p> <p>Over-investment;</p> <p>Withdrawal;</p> <p>Burn out;</p>	<p>Local Solidarity or peer pressure ?;</p> <p>School management need your cooperation;</p> <p>Microcorporatism (us versus them);</p>	<p>Collective bargaining (CB): negotiate conditions for success;</p> <p>Linking individual to local to national;</p> <p>Link to political (ties to wider political economy context) ;</p> <p>Balance between cooperation and opposition;</p>

# Local responses



# Local responses

- Resist individualisation;
- Inter-generational solidarity;
- Bridging gap among co-workers of different status and professional grouping;
- Common agenda based on:
  - Quality of services;
  - Quality of working life;
  - Professional autonomy

# Conclusions

- New management in Schools in particular and public services in general is tied to larger political agendas;
- Meant to draw more labour out of workers and gain control over work content and work processes

# Conclusions

- As part of this trend there is a concerted effort to individualise work relations and to widen the gap between collective bargaining and union activities outside the workplace and work relations that take place within schools.

# Conclusions

- The challenge for unions is how they link the three levels through their activities;
- The battleground is very political !

# To rephrase the opening questions

- Are these pressures for performance and more demanding work present in your workplace ? How ?
- What are teachers' responses ?
- What should be teachers' responses ?
- What should be the union role in terms of linkages between schools, of collective bargaining, politics, of wider solidarities ?