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Dualities and dilemmas: multiple viewpoints on the TAFE teacher's identity

The current project

- **Doctoral research in progress: professional identity of TAFE teachers**
- **Review of multiple strands of literature about VET teachers and teaching**
- **Interviews with teachers of degree programs in TAFE**
- **Analysis of dualities, dilemmas and possible convergences**



Impetus for the project

- Prompted by *disquiet* about the varied discourses of teachers and teaching – ‘training market’ and ‘public good’
(Dorothy Smith)
- Are these mutually exclusive or can they work together?

'The hidden agenda of modernity' (Toulmin 1990)

- **'Rationalist' modernity – search for certainty; technical, scientific solutions – link to economic rationalist agendas**
- ***Industry/jobs focus***
- **'Concern for the broader humane streams of understanding' – social justice**
- ***Teaching as an art/craft with a moral purpose***

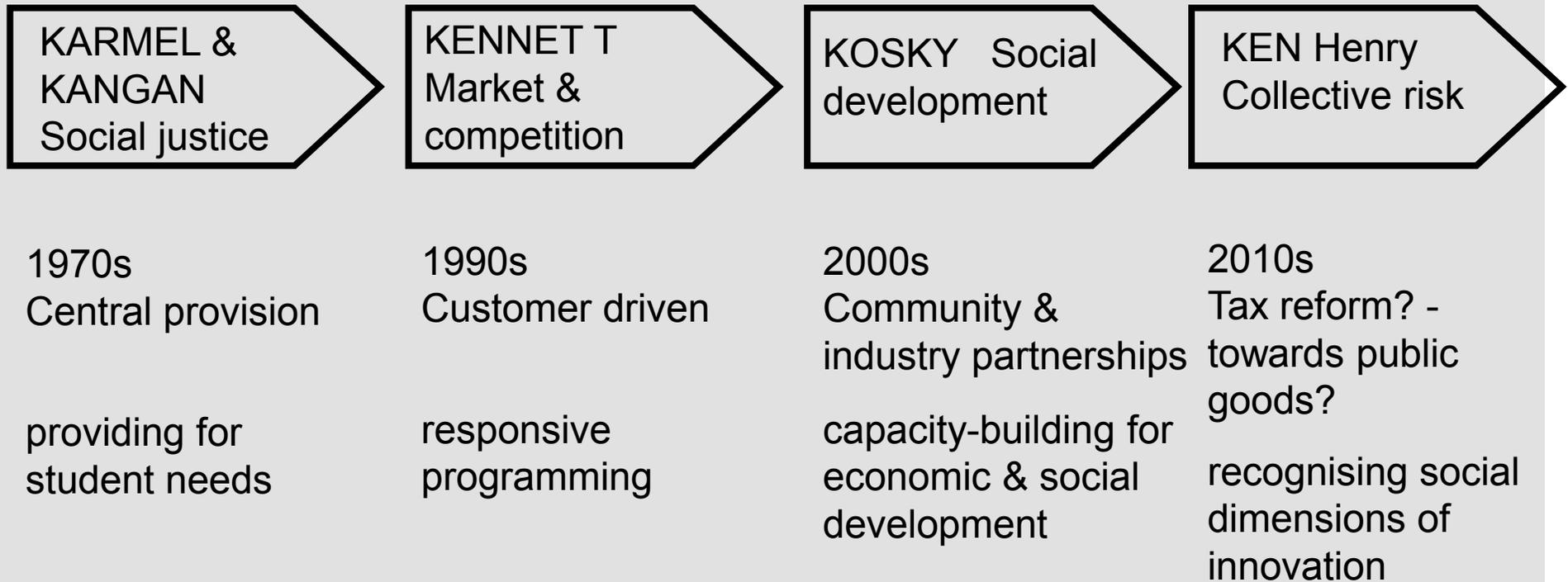


Toulmin's agenda

'What we have to do is make the technical and the humanistic strands in modern thought work together more effectively than they have in the past.'



Waves of reform



Two views

‘Australia’s training system will be even more responsive to the ever-changing needs of industry’

(Skilling Australia, 2005)

‘Higher education will continue to be a cornerstone of our legal, economic, social and cultural institutions...’

(Bradley et al, 2009)



Contradictory discourses about teachers

‘...new professional identities... which interact and compete with the traditional discourses that once provided TAFE teachers with a distinct and separate educational identity’

(Chappell, 1999)



Literature reviewed

- **Government and regulatory**
- **Research**
- **Fiction**

- **Not confined to VET literature**



Interviews with teachers

- **TAFE degrees as site – relatively new, relatively controversial**
- **Likely differences in practice and organisation**
- **Possibly turbulent changes likely to be fruitful for reflection**



Emerging identities (so far) (Gee 2001)

Institutional identity

- **Teacher or industry practitioner?**
- **Industry and scholarly currency?**

Discourse identity

- **Are degrees 'interlopers' in TAFE?**

Affiliation identity

- **Maintaining links with industry, universities, fellow teachers**



Dilemmas, challenges and rewards

- **Recognition of TAFE degrees slow to emerge – frustrating**
- **Staffing restrictions due to industrial agreements – pay scales, qualifications**
- **Different student groups and teaching styles across programs – very demanding**

BUT

- **Rewarding to effect changes in the lives of students lacking in confidence and experience**

