CEPaLS 06:

Knowledge networks and educational reform in England

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Abstract
Focusing on the last three decades of radical reform in education in England, I will draw on data from the *Knowledge Production in Educational Leadership* (KPEL) project (ESRC, RES-000-23-1192) to examine the relationship between networks and policymaking. I have collected professional biographies from over 130 policy actors, and together with studying their professional practice, outputs and employment locations, I have mapped their interconnections in two main ways: first, I have identified a relationship between government and networks that I call *institutionalised governance*; and second, I have described and explained this relationship through what I call *regimes of practice*. What this work has enabled me to do is to not only map activity, but to also examine objective relations within a field of practice. The paper not only presents evidence and analysis about the relationship between policy and networks, but seeks to make a contribution to how this can be explained.

Introduction

The paper presents a theorising of data from the *Knowledge Production in Educational Leadership* (KPEL) Project (ESRC RES-000-23-1192) whereby I deploy Bourdieu's thinking tools of 'game', 'field', 'habitus', and 'capitals' to present *institutionalised governance* and *regimes of practice* as a contribution to explaining knowledge exchange within networks and networking. I do this by locating the analysis within education policymaking in England, with a specific focus on the investment by the UK government under New Labour (1997-2010) into school leadership. I begin by outlining how and why this is an important and interesting site through which to investigate networks, before I go onto examine how the KPEL project makes an important contribution to theorising.

New Labour and the leadership of schools

Successive New Labour governments (1997-2010) sought to modernise public services in England through investment in return for quality and accountability (Blair 2006). Within education this manifested itself through building on the Thatcher inheritance of site based management from 1988, with a rapidly implemented programme of reforms to all aspects of teaching and learning, the profession, and the school as an organisation (DfEE 1997). I have

been studying policy reform and school leadership, where election manifestos make important

claims:

> "The strength of a school is critically dependent on the quality of its head. We will establish mandatory qualifications for the post. A head teacher will be appointed to a position only when fully trained to accept the responsibility" (The Labour Party 1997, unpaged).

> "Headteachers must have the freedom and resources necessary to run their schools effectively. We have improved pay and training for headteachers and delegated more funding to schools. Where they demonstrate success, we will further extend their freedom to manage their schools effectively. We will reduce the regulatory burden on all schools" (The Labour Party 2001, unpaged).

> "We want all secondary schools to be independent specialist schools with a strong ethos, high-quality leadership, good discipline (including school uniforms), setting by ability and high-quality facilities as the norm" (The Labour Party 2005, p34).

> "Our task now is to devolve more power and responsibility to strong school leaders and to spread excellence, with up to 1,000 schools, through mergers and take-overs, part of an accredited school group by 2015 – a new generation of not-for-profit chains of schools with a proven track record" (The Labour Party 2010, pp 3.3-3.4).

These gobbets of intent illuminate an enduring emphasis on (a) the single leader as the causal

link for improved outcomes with support from an elite and highly paid leadership cadre of senior

staff (who may or may not be qualified teachers); (b) the need for regulated and accredited

training with national standards, delivered from 2000 through a National College for School

Leadership; (c) the model of transformational leadership as the preferred model of good

practice with hybrids such as distributed leadership; and (d) the model of the effective school

as an independent corporate business, with performance management audits and pay

designed to erradicate failure and reward local delivery of national reforms.

In order to bring about change New Labour needed to engage with knowledge production

processes, where clear messages were delivered (what Barber 2007 calls "deliverology") from

the centre to the preriphery without interference. They accessed established knowledge

(evidence, facts, beliefs) about school leadership, the ways of knowing or methodologies that

produced knowledge, and the knowers or the people who produced and popularised knowledge

and knowing (for detail see Gunter 2012).

Knowledge: New Labour actively sought to produce knowledge for school leadership. This

was done through, first, commissioning of meta-analysis of current literatures (Leithwood et al.

2006); second, developing (and updating) transformational, instructional and distributed leadership as preferred models of effective leadership (DfES/PwC 2007); third, commissioning of research projects that examined leadership practices and the relationship with student outcomes (Day et al. 2009); and fourth, constructing and communicating a discourse about what can be said and who can say it through National College seminars, conferences, and online 'hot seat' events (Hopkins 2001).

A study of policy texts show that statements about school leadership contain functional knowledge claims where the purposes and rationales are about making the system work with efficiency and effectiveness, and the narratives are about delivery, targets and accountability (Raffo and Gunter 2008). Hence functionality was translated into knowledge and know how about behaviours and attributes that were trainable and observable (e.g. DfES 2004). This was often presented as common sense statements about what works, underpinned by beliefs in the power of the single person to bring about changes. A study of speeches, policy papers and ministerial writing (books, chapters, diaries) shows the dominance of the business transformational model with the headteacher as CEO, and the problematic nature of this model (a realization that not all heads were charismatic or needed to be so in order to bring about change) led to a delegatory model with all staff branded leaders in a hierarchy known as distributed leadership.

Knowing: New Labour's functional knowledge claims were generated by a type of knowing based on beliefs about the normality and vitality of school leadership (some early ministers/advisers had been teachers) underpinned by (a) interview accounts from professionals about their perceptions of effective leadership; and (b) selective functional statistical data (usually from tests and inspections) about student outcomes at particular ages. They required schools to be measured according to Contextual Value Added methods, and wanted schools to become data rich regarding the measuring of achievement. They drew on school effectiveness and school improvement approaches to research (see Barber 1996, Reynolds et al. 1996) and commissioned research in order to identify a link between the headteacher and student outcomes (e.g. Leithwood and Levin 2005). New Labour dominated

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the funding of leadership research (see Weindling 2004), and researchers have provided ongoing reports of the micro-management of projects, burying of reports, and the denunciation of the projects that independently reported on evidence that contradicted or challenged policy strategy (Gunter and Thomson 2006). Policy often moved ahead without the evidence, and specifically the multi-million pound National College was set up without a robust research base. Short 'turn around' times and minimum reporting (often using electronic presentation software and bullet points) were used to produce clarity of message for busy ministers.

Knowers: New Labour brought into policymaking approaches to knowledge and knowing through contracting with particular types of knowers, specifically researchers from epistemic groups known as school effectiveness and school improvement, particular educational professionals from schools and local authorities, and private sector consultants from England and abroad. Approved of knowers were brought into policymaking in a number of ways: as advisers, as project contractors through to training and support for professionals. For example:

> **Appointments to the Department**: Michael Barber, Professor from the IoE University of London, headed up the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, and he was succeeded by David Hopkins, Professor from Nottingham University. Headteachers were invited to take up formal roles in the Department e.g. in Innovation Unit; as well as informally advise the government through 'dine and discuss' meetings.

> **Appointments to the National College for School Leadership**: headteacher David Jackson was appointed to head up research, and was succeeded by Professor Geoff Southworth from Reading University. The NCSL had regional hubs around England, where contracts were won by people who worked locally on training and knowledge transfer.

> **Consultants**: larger international companies won contracts from the Department, for example, PwC produced a report on the state of school leadership (DfES/PwC 2007) and had a five year contract to evaluate the Academies Programme (see Gunter 2011). Importantly commissioned projects were put out for tender, with individuals as well as consortia of bidders made up of people from a range of organisational locations winning training and research projects (see Day et al. 2009).

While knowledge workers often had different institutional locations and remits they sometimes shared professional credentials (e.g. researchers in higher education often had been teachers) and a commitment to improve education through working with government to both encourage appropriate reforms and to limit damaging reforms.

What this brief encounter with New Labour's leadership of schools strategy generates are questions about the relationship between knowledge production process and policy, specifically to ask questions about the types of knowledge, knowing and knowers related to the scoping, design and delivery of public policy. So I would ask: what types of knowledge, knowing and knowers are being used, and what/who is excluded, how does this happen, and why? This requires an investigation into the objective relations between those located within and external to government, and the exchange relationships that operate within policy processes.

Networks and exchange relationships

The conduct and processes of exchange relationships is central to the concerns of this symposium and this paper in particular. What my research shows is that those involved in policymaking engaged in different types of exchanges: first, in relation to knowledge: particular models of leadership effectiveness were designed and used, with a particular emphasis on transformational leadership and the development of hybrids such as instructional and distributed leadership; second, in relation to knowing: a particular emphasis on business models and concepts, specifically regarding performance and entrepreneurialism; and, third, in relation to knowers: an emphasis on people who could be trusted to speak and act in ways that were seen to be supportive of the reform agenda, and who were able to outspeak a potential opposition.

Exchanges of knowledge, know how, and stories about preferred policy people took place in public at conferences, on websites (e.g. knowledge pool on the NCSL website, see Thrupp 2005), and through publications; and behind the scenes as discussions and advice were tendered, and where alliances and friendships developed. Scripts were developed and shared that created an urgent reform imperative (e.g. the use of futuring and globalisation regarding

workforce production), used a shared language (e.g. improvement, effectiveness, change, remodelling, delivery) and metaphors (e.g. birds flying in formation), and normative advocacy statements (e.g. how improvements in school leadership will causally improve student learning outcomes). Those in leadership roles in government, agencies and/or the profession advocated and narrated the importance of the reforms and examples about how it could be done (e.g. Astle and Ryan 2008, Taylor 2009). Acclaim would be given in speeches naming particular heads as illuminative of modern and approved of school leadership, through to national awards and honours (Knighthoods, Damehoods).

Conceptualising this activity as networks is helpful to the development of critical education policy studies. The importance of networks in economic life has been identified by Seabright (2004) who identifies the division of labour and how exchange operates between humans who are not related by biology. That this works at all on a global scale can be regarded as incredible, and when it breaks down there can be major crises such as the food adulteration scandal in Europe in the early months of 2013, where the food chain from animal to plate was estimated by KPMG to have 450 points where failure could occur (Lawrence 2013).

The importance of networks in explaining exchange relationships within political conduct, and the interconnections between governmental hierarchy and civil society has grown rapidly. Policy networks are regarded as conceptually more robust in seeking to describe and explain policy process, and increasingly there is a normative trend regarding how government's in a complex world need to think about and conduct their business as network managers. Kickert et al. (1997) define policy networks as "(more or less) stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and/or policy programmes" (p6). By focusing on a problem then the actors with influence and agendas can be studied, and as Lecy et al. (2013) have shown work in public administration has tended to focus on three stages: "formation, governance and policy implementation" (p6). Their mapping of the field has identified that the belief in networks is stronger than the evidence base, and they raise important questions: "how do policy issues rise to the agenda through network mechanisms? Who introduces policy innovations to the network of influential policymakers and creates awareness

for the need of change? And, once the need for innovation is accepted, what are the networking mechanisms that shape the subsequent processes towards policy implementation?" (p14-15). Kingdon's (2003) analysis is helpful in showing the conditions and dimensions regarding how to address such questions, but there is a need for more conceptual work on this. In studying the work going on in critical education policy in England (and from a UK location) I would want to make the point that there is much activity but as yet not much resolution.

Important work is taking place regarding the mapping and theorising of the relationship between policy and knowledge production, and within the US we are indebted to the pioneering work of Callahan (1962), and more recently to the work of Spring (2012) who has shown the inter-relationship between business and education policy networks on a global scale. In the UK we can witness interest from reported outputs from a range of ESRC funded projects (e.g. Ball 2012, Ball and Junemann 2012, Gunter 2012, Grek 2013, Moss 2009, Wallace et al. 2011); with analysis that recognises the inter-relationships within networks and the location of professionals within localised policy enactment processes (e.g. Ball et al. 2012, Gunter and Forrester 2009). While these projects are concerned with interactions between policy actors, the serious deployment of network thinking has been undertaken by Ball (see Ball and Exley 2010, Ball and Junemann 2012): first, Ball (2008) presents his forensic work on "new policy communities" in education, where he makes the point: "the networks contain flows of influence as well as flows of people, and influence is carried back and forth across the boundaries between the public and private sectors; resources are exchanged, interests are served and rewards achieved. Through social relationships trust is established and views and discourses are legitimated. They structure and constrain, enable the circulation of ideas and give 'institutional force' to policy utterances, ensuring what can count as policy and limiting the possibilities of policy" (p753). Second, Ball (2009) presents heterarchy as the conceptualisation through which to understand the complex messiness of activity: "heterarchy is an organisational form somewhere between hierarchy and network which draws upon diverse horizontal and vertical links that permit different elements of the policy process to cooperate (and/or compete) while individually optimising different success criteria" (p689). Ball (2009) is explicit that his contribution is emerging, but this approach does have the promise to address Lecy et als (2013)

questions outlined above. Not least that the flow of people, information and ideas has the potential to generate, sustain and develop a change agenda, and through the operation of business methods the development of products is central to delivery.

The debates that have taken place so far suggest that there remains much exciting work to do, and Goodwin's (2009) reply to Ball (2008) emphasises the need for the exercise of power to be considered when seeking to describe, understand and explain network relationships in relation to impact. Importantly Goodwin (2009) makes the case that there is a need to examine the "differential resources and capabilities of networks and network actors" (p683), because:

> "The identification of simple 'contact' relations cannot be taken as evidence for the existence of network governance without a further investigation into the power relations involved. Since power relations concern differential distributions of resources and capacities, this might entail locating a network hegemon responsible for recruiting other members, investing networks with authority and setting terms of reference. This hegemon might be identified by its powers of decision making or agenda setting, power over the recruitment and exclusion process or control of flows of information" (p683).

Ball (2009) is in agreement with Goodwin, but stresses the need to build descriptions of networks alongside developing appropriate conceptualisations of power.

I am seeking to make a contribution to this through the deployment and development of Bourdieu's thinking tools to both map networks and to conceptualise power processes. Following Bourdieu (2000) I would want to argue that the debate can move forward in the following ways: first, there is a *game in play* that policy actors help design and play; second, there is a form of *institutionalised governance* where public institutions such as the Department seek to dominate the game and bring in networked individuals and groups to support this domination of the game; and, third, the power process can best be explained as a *regime of practice* where objective relations in the game are revealed through exchange processes. I will now say something more about this.

> **Game in play:** following Thomson's (2005) analysis of Bourdieu's thinking tools of field and habitus I argue that the field of education has been breached by the fields of the economy and power, whereby the game in play is that of shifting particular services from public to private ownership (with some hybrids through the subsidy of private services through public funding e.g. academies). In Bourdieu's (1990) terms privatisation has

been *codified* by successive governments as the dominant *game* to play where speeches, policies, research and training brought recognition and acclaim. Playing happens when "a set of people take part in rule-bound activity, an activity which, without necessarily being the product of obedience to rules, *obeys certain regularities*" (Bourdieu 1990, p64, emphasis in original). The players were ministers, civil servants, private sector consultants, private philanthropists, members of think tanks, headteachers and professors, who "have a feel for the necessity and the logic of the game" (p64), and so they staked their interests, ideas and careers in the *game* through the regularities of a harmonized disposition. However, these players did not always directly play for privatisation, and their espoused disposition to do their best on behalf of children meant that sub games had to be constructed and worked on in order to build commitment. Therefore they signed up to play a game about school leadership (and other sub games e.g. city academies, federations, literacy strategy), which acted as a proxy for privatisation.

This privatisation game is played through focusing on the failure of students, teachers and schools under local public administration, here targets, data and threshold scores regarding 'success' have been used to identify scores for key stage outcomes as well as individual teacher and whole school value added performance. The solution to this constructed failure is privatisation in two interconnected ways: first, the reform of public administration through taking on board business roles, models and people, where educational provision has to be designed, organised, staffed and delivered as a business where the school is a firm; and second, the movement of educational provision from public administration into the control of private interests, and the setting up of new provision outside of local public administration, with a trend towards for-profit products and services. The emphasis from 1988 onwards has been on both, but until the Coalition from May 2010 it had been mainly on the first, and this created the structural and cultural conditions that has enabled the second to happen and accelerate without widespread public opposition or concern. School leadership is a part of this: it is located in a discourse

of rescuing children and schools from failure; and it enables business delivery and product development.

Institutionalised Governance: the development of this privatisation *game* can be explained through conceptualising *institutionalised governance* as the space where public institutions controlled policy ideas and agenda setting by working with and generating an education industry with niched products for school leadership. I argue this not only because the debates about networks in the English political context recognise the endurance and importance of hierarchical bureaucracies (Ball 2008) but also that government does more than manage networks of private individuals/groups in policy processes. Certain public institutions remained strong within public education administration, notably the dominant role of No 10, the Treasury and the Department. Within the Department important 'units' were established by New Labour e.g. Standards and Effectiveness Unit, and the Innovation Unit, and these secured regulation and made interventions to secure school improvement. At 'arms length' the Department established the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) as the delivery agency for reforms through training the profession in the right type of knowledge, ways of knowing and accessing preferred knowers (see Gunter 2012).

The mandate to govern was used relentlessly in order to establish a process of top to bottom control of teaching and learning, and so in the inter-relationship between hierarchy, markets and civil society the former remained strong. Nevertheless, government needed intellectual and delivery work to be done, and so trusted knowledge workers were contracted to advise and deliver policy outcomes. Such contracts were formal ones of employment (e.g. taking on a role in the National College); product development (e.g. writing the NPQH, LPSH, HIP training packages); training (e.g. delivering sessions and assessing according to national standards); and evaluation (e.g. measuring the impact of a reform); but also informal regarding the generation of expectations and being part of an important and necessary process of radical reform.

The process was presented as rational and based on open competition, but in reality there was no level playing field.

The nature of this contractualism was (a) legal through which conduct and obligations regarding a delivery remit could be articulated and if necessary used to extend the relationship or terminate it; and (b) imaginary through which self-regulation within a contract culture generated a language and practice of bidding with subordination to steering group monitoring, where trusted friendships and co-operative alliances enabled network scanning for "which ideas and people are 'sound'" (Spring 2012 p23), and fed the potential for mutual advantage. A New Labour *habitus* or *disposition* to think and practice in complementary ways emerged within these policy processes, was combined with a *doxa* of self-evident truths that spoke to those who staked their professional practice as *capital* in the *field* (Bourdieu 2000). The development of the leadership strategy is a part of this, where high profile companies and entrepreneurs along with individual professionals were contracted by government to engage in 'for' policy enactments.

Regimes of Practice: drawing on regime theory (Harding 2000) and Bourdieu's analysis of social practice (Bourdieu 2000) I have identified a *logic of practice* within which knowledge producers in companies, schools, think tanks, and universities at home and abroad located themselves within *regimes of practice* as structured positions in the *field*. Figure 1 shows the map of these regimes:

Figure 1: Regimes of Practice and New Labour Education Policy (Gunter 2012).
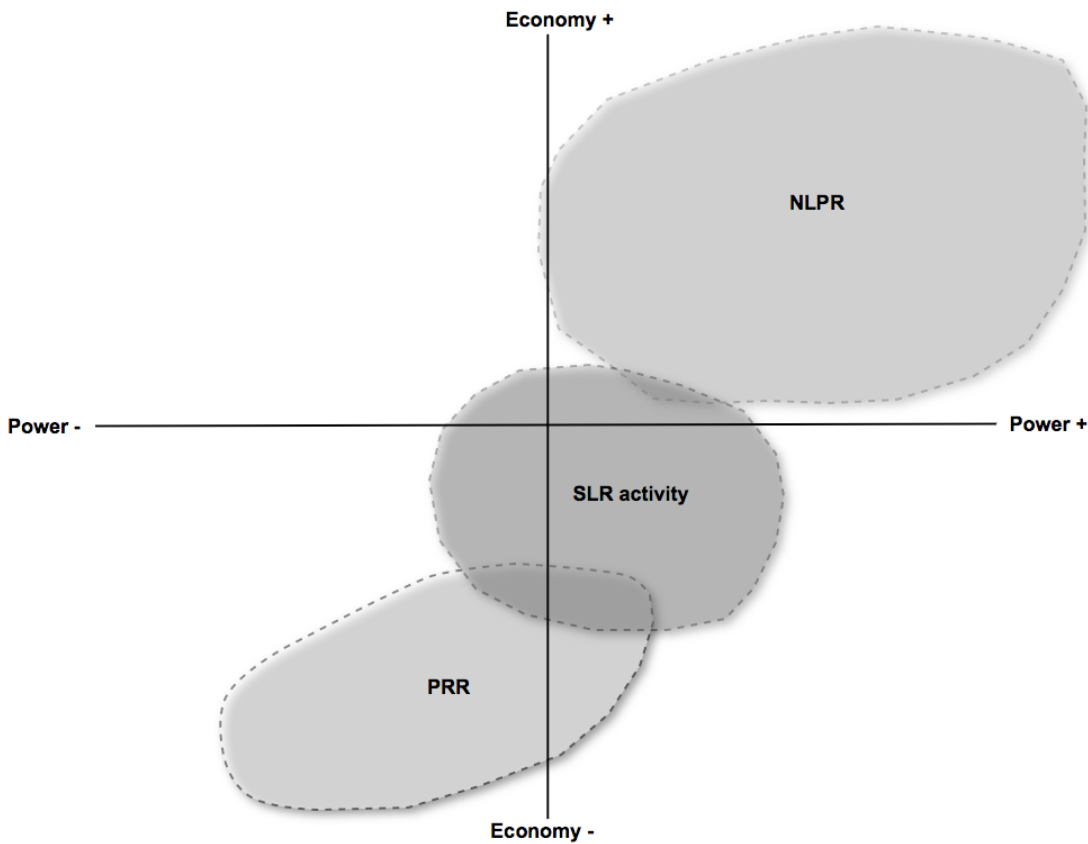
I identified a New Labour Policy Regime (NLPR) where those who positioned themselves here (ministers, civil servants, advisers, private consultants, researchers and some headteachers) sought to dominate but were dominated by the demands of the market and the role of the private sector in educational provision. Objective relations in this regime show exchanges in capital: the government sought modernisation through exchanges with private business, and private business sought access to markets; and professionals who were drawn into this (as consultants, advisers, trainers) sought status and recognition for the profession, and the government and business wove a veil of legitimacy with parents, children and the profession. Leadership researchers were a part of this, some were directly involved with ministers and No 10 while others worked in the Department, or in national/regional training. Contracts enabled people to be brought in for short-term activity, and this generated product development through the continued

identification of failure combined with school improvement logic. While other regimes existed, not least the Policy Research Regime (PRR) that sought to describe, understand and explain policy changes, the NLPR operated as if alternatives did not exist. A key feature of the social practices of this regime is the focus on delivery rather than debating the options.

The specific claims underpinning this contribution is that in seeking to understand and explain the inter-relationship between hierarchy, markets and networks, there is a need to give attention to the role of hierarchy in simultaneously generating and stabilising markets and networks. New Labour set about its radical educational reforms using the mandate to govern from 1997 (and from subsequent elections) as the legitimacy and inspiration to bring about major changes in teaching and learning, and in doing so Scott's (1998) analysis of large scale reform and planning as "seeing like a state" is helpful. Indeed, many gains in regard to civil rights, housing, transport, health, welfare and education, have been a product of such 'seeing' and 'doing' by the state. At the same time this does need problematizing, not least how after thirty years of radical education reform in England we might ask questions about who does the seeing and in whose interests.

Scott (1998) identifies how reform happens through what he calls "state simplifications" as a means of making reality legible:

> "State simplifications have at least five characteristics that deserve emphasis. Most obviously, state simplifications are observations of only those aspects of social life that are of official interest. They are *interested*, utilitarian facts. Second, they are also nearly always written (verbal or numerical) *documentary* facts. Third, they are typically *static* facts. Fourth, most stylized state facts are also *aggregate* facts. Aggregate facts may be impersonal… or simply a collection of facts about individuals… Finally, for most purposes, state officials need to group citizens in ways that permit them to make a collective assessment. Facts that can be aggregated and presented as averages or distributions must therefore be *standardized* facts. However, the unique the actual circumstances of the various individuals who make up the aggregate, it is their sameness or, more precisely, their differences along a standardized scale or continuum that are of interest" (p80, emphasis in original).

Such simplifications are based on data that is usually faulty, but importantly the use of this data to create classifications as a means of counting and measuring, but it is not of itself "simple minded" where the sophistication of enactment is located in:

"first, the knowledge that an official needs must give him or her a synoptic view of the ensemble; it must be cast in terms that are replicable across many cases. In this respect, such facts must lose their particularity and reappear in schematic or simplified form as a member of a class of facts. Second, in a meaning closely related to the first, the grouping of synoptic facts necessarily entails collapsing or ignoring distinctions that might otherwise be relevant" (p81).

It seems to me that for New Labour the headteacher as the holder of power to deliver national reforms locally was the necessary simplification for reforms to work: the headteacher was a historical and contemporary fact in regard to controlling the school population and activity; this was documented, not least as static facts through government texts; and, the aggregation of information, facts and beliefs about headteachers had been collected informally through experiences and formally through selected research accounts. In this way the headteacher as the cause of effectiveness and improvement was simplified into existence, and could be plotted onto a standardised scale through inspection, test and league table data. So the identification of the headteacher as the effective leader was based on faulty data, but what knowledge and ways of knowing that were identified enabled the production of 'standards' that came from preferred models of leadership and the attributes of particular 'approved of' headteachers. Barber's (2007) construction and enthusiasm for "deliverology" regarding the transfer of the policy requirements from the Minister to the child is an illumination of 'seeing like a state', where the process is concerned with what Scott (1998) calls "simplification, abstraction, and standardization" (p81). In addition, Scott (1998) further argues that this seeks "to create a terrain and a population with precisely those standardized characteristics that will be easiest to monitor, count, assess, and manage" (p81-82), and so New Labour sought to colonise professional practice and remodel the composition and identities of the school workforce in ways that generated effectiveness activity that could be subjected to simplification.

The argument that I want to generate from this is that the individuals and groups as 'networks' that played the leadership game within institutionalised governance as a government regime did so on the basis of their contribution to the simplification process. They produced facts (beliefs and statistics) along with ways of aggregating and giving meaning and labels, and variously acted as popularisers of the simplifications (through keynote talks, online discussions, publications etc). The exchange processes required them to recognise that the state was

'seeing like a state' and as such they had to 'see' in this way as *little states*, and indeed central to business practice is simplification. While the claim is made about meeting needs, diversity and choice, business tendering for commissioned projects requires them to offer a product (a skill in designing a questionnaire, an approach to report writing and dissemination, a team of people who have credibility with the profession) as a contribution to simplifications. I have data from those involved in this process, and while there was sometimes frustration by people and within networks regarding the government's approach to school leadership with knowledge of problems with their model of transformational leadership, they went along with it, and sought to remodel the simplification in due course with new hybrids. They knew that confusing the simplification would lead to exclusion. The production of leadership products is therefore based on the need to make the world capable of being read, but as Scott (1998) argues: "state simplifications can be considered part of an ongoing 'project of legibility', a project that is never fully realised" (p80). So as *little states* individual and clusters of knowledge workers embrace simplification as a means of generating new business with the state, and recognises how conducive it is to non-state business. When governments leave office, as in 2010, then simplification as a process continues, and can include some of the same plans and actors who present themselves as neutral simplifiers.

Scott (1998) presents examples of large scale modernising plans, and shows how they can fail the people they were meant to benefit: "If I were asked to condense the reasons behind these failures into a single sentence, I would say that the progenitors of such plans regarded themselves as far smarter and farseeing than they really were and, at the same time, regarded their subjects as far more stupid and incompetent than *they* really were" (p343). When tensions and contradictions emerged within this simplification process, the state can and does exclude – sometimes in highly visible and dramatic ways. Indeed, I would argue that the claims made by the state and 'little states' about the potency of leadership to improve schools and make them effective have not been borne out in reality. While arguments take place over the readability of simplifications, the case continues to be made that it is the process and the elites who control it which is the prime issue. Hence there is considerable work on how and why

children (Smyth 2006), and teachers (Ball 2003) are positioned as ignorant and in need of the simplifications, along with work on how children and teachers (Fielding 2006, Wrigley et al. 2012) work in ways that challenge and replace those simplifications. These are networks that are involved in exchange relationships that can also 'see like a state' such as research councils, university bureaucracies, and institutions in civil society such as pressure groups, political parties and unions. At the same time there is a need to examine activity that aims to work differently and develop education policy through individuals and networks that does not use the state (and its reform simplifications) to script their agenda against. So there is a need to undertake research that begins with educational issues, and how individuals and networks focus on educational purposes. Whether, how and when this interacts with state policy processes is crucial to developing analysis about activity that is independent of and potentially resistant to official external policy.

A pause?

The use of Scott's (1998) conceptualisation of the state to understanding the relationship between the state, public policy and knowledge, enables the contribution from the KPEL project to be further developed. Specifically the questions posed by Lecy et al. (2013) outlined above can be addressed as follows:

❑ "how do policy issues rise to the agenda through network mechanisms?" The game in play shapes and structures the policy issues as a *doxa* (in this case the self evident truths about school leadership), and research shows how a shared *habitus* is revealed through practice. The formation and activity of a government regime located within institutionalised governance, structures an institutionalised *doxa* of simplifications, and when combined with *misrecognition* it enables agenda setting to work productively.

❑ "Who introduces policy innovations to the network of influential policymakers and creates awareness for the need of change?" This process operates within the exchange processes within the government regime, whereby those located in a public institution have the legitimacy of the state and engage with 'outsiders' as a means of delivering their mandate. Policy innovations have their origins in those who have won

elections and who want to win the next election as well, and how they interact with those who they regard as enabling of their agenda (not least through the branding and recombining of ideas as 'new'). The relationship between ideas, strategies and tactics may be at different stages, and so individuals and groups in a networked relationship may provide varying degrees of information, possibilities and delivery plans.

❑ "And, once the need for innovation is accepted, what are the networking mechanisms that shape the subsequent processes towards policy implementation?" (p14-15). The idea of the game has stability but the innovations within it are multiple, and so the government regime is replete with activity: intensive negotiations, product development and testing, delivery processes and data production. Within this simplification operates to bring a sense of coherence about what is known and is worth knowing, and how outcomes are addressed.

What addressing these questions does is to demonstrate that we do have conceptual work that can move thinking and analysis from contact to the exercise of power. However, what is necessary is to shift from forward tracking questions that Lecy et al. (2013) ask to backward tracking, whereby the focus is on what the situation is and how it has come to develop in that way. Importantly repetitions in failed policy innovations (e.g. CTCs, GMS, LMS, Academies, Free Schools) as new innovations can be examined. In this way the simplifications that are visible in policy texts (white papers, green papers, speeches etc) can be related to the work of particular people and groups, and so as I have shown under New Labour education policy can be related to functionally descriptive and normative knowledge claims that have their origins school effectiveness and improvement projects and networks. In this case the individuals and groups involved stretched between and through government institutions (ministers, civil servants, advisers) and other organisational settings such as universities, schools, private companies (researchers, consultants, headteachers), and as such the knowledge exchange processes between the state and 'little states' are visible within leadership strategy simplifications.

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