This is not yet another book on New Labour and neoliberalism — but the only book which uses policy case study evidence to show the rhetorical nature of the commitment New Labour appeared to have been making to education. Unlike other books on that era, this one aims to review New Labour’s time in government through specific policy texts.

This book reviews some of the major policy shifts in the education sector, analysing selected case study policies in order to articulate dominant discourses in recent policy-making which have helped establish a particular hegemony. The book’s originality lies in its policy analysis and case study base, whereby key policy texts across different sectors are dissected using the ‘policy cycle’ framework, allowing for an in depth analysis of the policy discourse as well as a discussion on how the neoliberal agenda was reflected and/or promoted.

Education is often only perceived as limited to policies relating to schools and higher education. However the book seeks to demonstrate that education as a sector is a much broader field and therefore the areas covered include key policies in citizenship and youth work, widening participation in higher education, the place of inclusive education in the curriculum, the undergraduate medical curriculum, and the effect of the Cox review on creativity. In effect the broad selection of sectors demonstrates that New Labour’s education policies were not only detrimental in traditional education settings, but also affected areas such as medicine and the media which are of importance to those who no longer are affected by what happens in institutions of learning and teaching. The book is consequently relevant for a much wider audience beyond the education community.

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EDUCATIONAL FUTURES
RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE
Volume 52

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Policy, Discourse and Rhetoric

How New Labour Challenged Social Justice and Democracy

Edited by

Marie Lall
For Dave Gillborn, who introduced me to sociology of education and for NWM, who died on the 1st of January 2012. He believed that writing could change the world.
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An introduction on how New Labour introduced neoliberalism into Britain’s education system

This book reviews the major shifts in the education sector under New Labour between 1997 and 2009, analysing selected case study policies in order to articulate dominant discourses in recent policy-making which have helped establish a particular hegemony. It illustrates how, despite their label and previous history as supporters of socialist policies, New Labour chose a rhetoric of ‘the Third Way’, heavily influenced by the neoliberal. This dominant discourse, which with globalisation has been embraced by the majority of Western cultures, emphasises the role of the free market, the individual as consumer and the state as a regulator as opposed to a provider, with irrevocable effects on social justice. This book focuses particularly on the influence of a neoliberal agenda in education. It explores how competing discourses of social justice and democracy have been challenged and how through the use of particular language, engagement with these ideologies has evolved and, marketed as ‘the common sense approach’, is becoming widely accepted within most state sectors in the UK.

However this is not yet another book on New Labour and neoliberalism. This volume is different from the rest of the literature as it uses policy case study evidence to show the rhetorical nature of the commitment New Labour appeared to have been making to education and the gap between text and practice. It builds on Ball’s Education Debate (2008), but widens the discussion to include issues such as higher education and citizenship amongst others. The book focuses on how neoliberalism was promoted through the discourse of the chosen policies in education, making neoliberalism the ‘new common sense’. Unlike other books on that era, this one aims to review New Labour’s time in government through specific policy texts.

Education is often only perceived as limited to policies relating to schools and higher education. However the book seeks to demonstrate that education as a sector is a much broader field and therefore the areas covered include key policies in citizenship and youth work, widening participation in higher education, the place of inclusive education in the curriculum, the undergraduate medical curriculum, and the attempt to harness creativity with regard to the media industry. The book emanates out of the Contemporary Education Policy optional module of the Institute of Education, University of London’s Ed D
programme. The contributors are all specialists in their field, working as lecturers at various universities across the UK as well as working on their own doctorate. Two doctoral students working on neoliberal theory from another university were invited to join the project. The varied backgrounds of the contributors allowed for a wide range of disciplines and a detailed discussion of the crossover of issues, which enriches the debate. The contributors chose what they considered the key policy text of their area for analysis. By bringing ‘their policy’ to this book they also hope to bring the debate to a wider audience. In effect the broad selection of sectors demonstrates that New Labour’s education policies were not only detrimental in traditional education settings, but also affected areas such as medicine and the media which are of importance to those who no longer are affected by what happens in institutions of learning and teaching. Despite the wide spectrum of policies, the coherence of the book is maintained through its structure of policy analysis that is replicated in every chapter and the discussion of the discursive materials relating to neoliberalism and education.

This introduction will briefly cover the rationale of use of the Policy Cycle, the tool around which the book revolves and the rationale for the selection of the key policy texts and moments. It also discusses the links between the various chapters and how the book moves from policies affecting young people through citizenship and youth work, to issues pertaining to special educational needs in schools, to the failed widening participation agenda in higher education. Beyond the scope of schools and higher education it then explains how the book moves on to discuss the effects of education policies in the professional arenas of the media and medical education and the relevance of these arenas in the wider education debate.

Why do we need to be aware of policy?

Policy is incredibly influential in determining how individuals interact, what they perceive to be ‘good’, and how they shape their lives in order to fulfil or move against cultural rewards for ‘success’. Policy often reflects a conversation between influential players in its construction, including communities affected by that policy, business and media, although their power and influence negotiating the focus and impact of policy, of course, varies. Policy will create and shape how society is desired to function and ‘be’ in certain contexts, influencing the language which people value, the actions which receive reward and the way in which people choose to express ‘goodness’ as a way of conforming or rejecting certain policy. Particular communities are often challenged and required to change by policy. Many feel threatened and isolated as a result. What this book highlights is the commonalities of these challenges within a particular timeframe. This book illustrates how a number of different policies produced during the reign of ‘New Labour’ represent the impact of influential ideologies, shaping the priorities and language which different services are expected to fulfil.
INTRODUCTION

A TOOL TO FACILITATE A CRITICAL APPROACH - THE POLICY CYCLE

There are many different ways of critiquing policy in order to understand the ways in which it achieves (or does not achieve) its influence. We have chosen to use the Policy Cycle as a theoretical framework to analyse selected case study policies in order to discern dominant discourses in recent policies establishing and supporting a particular hegemony.

The ‘Policy Cycle’ as a concept and a theoretical framework was developed by Stephen Ball along with Richard Bowe and Anne Gold. (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992) The key question at the heart of the debate is the extent to which the state determines the policy making process and as a consequence the room available for other actors, especially those involved in implementation to re-interpret the policy text in practice. In this analysis both the process and the extent to which the state determines policy content is key. This is particularly salient in today’s globalising world, as the number of active actors involved in policy making is increasing and creating a more complex playing field.

There is some degree of difference between state controlled and state-centred explanations of the role of the state in policy formulation, however both see the state as the primary actor in making education policy and do not engage greatly with contributions to education policy made by actors outside the state. State control models would see the state as determining in all policy making. These models come from the Marxist tradition - influenced by theorists like Habermas, Althusser, Gramsci and Offe. These authors stressed the structural constraints and the power of the state. State-centred explanations of policy making however, see the state as dominating but also acknowledge other influences. Dale (1989) argues that the state has to fight to secure active consent, to secure hegemonic control and as a result there are inherent contradictions and conflicts with different levels of the state. However both positions argue that a central position should be allocated to the state in policy analysis, because the state is more than just another actor as it is able to employ legitimate coercion, shape institutional features, define and enforce conditions of ownership and control, and secure active consent.

On the other hand, Bowe et al. (1992) argue that the state-centred models are too simple and too linear and that they neglect the agency of anything other than the institutions of the state. They criticise the state control approach for the detachment of the policy generation from implementation, which reinforces tidy, managerial, linear models. Its focus on macro-based theoretical analysis, ‘silence’ the voices of teachers, students and parents. They argue that we need to understand the histories and ideologies of the people who receive policy texts, and what drives them to implement policy in the way that they do. Bowe et al. stress that the policy process does not just begin when the policy is launched and received as a text by the people who have to implement it. Even the production of the text itself is not one static moment, but a process. Texts themselves are the products of compromises and power struggles. They have interpretational and representational
history and ‘policy sediment’ builds up around them, which in effect means that there are never really any completely ‘new’ policies.

The notion of a Policy Cycle is therefore where policy is made and remade in different contexts. Each of the three contexts described below have public and private arenas of action and each involves compromise, and in some cases even the repression or ignoring of certain interest groups altogether. By taking a policy through the various contexts of the Policy Cycle, the origins of the policy, the voices which are reflected in the policy and the effects of the policy interpretation become clearer.

- **Context of influence** is where interest groups struggle over the construction of policy discourses and where key policy concepts are established. Important influences are networks of influence, the relationships between civil servants and ministers, the micro-politics within parties, and the role of unions and Local Education Authorities where they are present. There is also the overriding context of a democratic society and the need to appeal to the electorate; Which voices are heard is crucial.

- **Context of policy text production** is where texts represent policies. Texts have to be read in relation to time and the site of production, and with other relevant texts. This context is one of policy compromise and misunderstandings. Since authors can’t control the meanings of their texts, the process of interpretation and re-interpretation is key. (Bowe et al. 1992) Another feature of the context is that text writers have to be careful not to be too radical in order to stay in power. In order to ensure re-election the middle classes cannot be asked for too many sacrifices.

- **Context of practice** is where policy is subject to interpretation, recreation and practice on the ground. In general the policy in action does not reflect what was originally envisioned either in the context of influence or in the context of text production.

In his 1994 book, Ball added two more contexts in apparent recognition of the need for a feedback loop from the context of practice at micro level back to the context of influence at macro level:

- **Context of outcomes** is where the impact of policies on existing social inequalities is seen. This context’s analytical concern is with the issues of justice, equality and individual freedom. Policies are analysed in terms of their impact upon and interactions with existing inequalities and forms of injustice.

- **Context of political strategy** is where one identifies political activities which might tackle the inequalities which have been identified in the Context of Outcomes. In effect this is the feedback loop into the Context of Influence.

Whilst the Policy Cycle framework does not explain how policy gets done, it is a way of thinking about policy, a way of researching policy and a way of theorising policy. As such the authors of the various chapters have used it as a starting point, a flexible schema which they developed, extended and changed according to their needs and areas of work.
By using this framework we are able to examine the ideologies and discourses which are common to a number of different policies, affecting multiple disciplines, professionals and students during the New Labour terms in office. In particular, we focus upon the prominence and impact of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism and its tensions

David Harvey defines neoliberalism as ‘a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.’ (Harvey 2005, 2). This theory, based on 19th century English liberalism (see the first chapter in this volume) resulted in politically guided neoliberal measures that include amongst other things de-regulation, privatisation, commercialisation of public services and the use of market proxies, reinforcing the profit motive. Neoliberalism also promotes the importance of individual entrepreneurial freedom, competition, choice, and initiative, believing that these features can be effectively achieved through a free market (Harris, 2007; Harvey, 2005). The assumption behind the promotion of free markets is that the laws of demand and supply will encourage higher quality at competitive prices. The role of the state in this context is to regulate the market without intervening in it, while consumers choose the alternative that suits them best using the information produced by the market (Olssen and Peters, 2005). In this context the state has to provide an institutional framework to safeguard the capitalist system, but does not directly provide services or intervene. These ideas are not new. Hayek in his ‘A Road to Serfdom’ (1944) argued early on that state intervention needed minimising as it fosters a ‘dependency culture’. Instead the focus should be on individuals making their own choices and gains in market economy – where services are not provided collectively and paid for by the state but provided privately by a range of competitive providers. Competition between these providers would ensure the high quality of their services, individual consumers would make their own choices, and individual effort, talent and hard work would be the key to success. Structural inequalities are not recognised as impediments.

Neoliberalism can be identified as the predominant ideology of the last decades (Giroux, 2002); in effect the new ‘common sense’ that has replaced the social democracy of the post-war era. It has penetrated education (Harris, 2007) changing the purpose of education itself (Bartlett et al., 2002; Wolf, 2002). Education currently is seen as a main condition for economic success, central to any modern economy. (Gamanikov 2009) Often forgotten is that education is relevant for the development of citizenship values (see chapter 2 in this volume), and for the sake of learning (McGregor, 2009; Wolf, 2002). Although it brings economic benefits it also brings an essential contribution to the public good
(Margison 1993 in McGregor, 2009). Neoliberal ideology not only changed the purpose of education, but it also changed the structure of education systems (Bartlett et al., 2002; Wolf, 2002). Through the implementation of neoliberal policies, education was opened to the market assuming the features just described. This has meant that there are private providers entering into the education system in a context of deregulation, which constitutes the commercialisation and marketisation of education (Ball, 2007; Verger, 2008).

The debate over the role of the state led to reforms across all UK public services. Over the last 20 years the way the public sector has been managed has changed markedly - there has been a shift away from old-style bureaucratic administration. The elevation of effectiveness and efficiency as the sole criteria of legitimacy reflects the increasing dominance of an ethic of managerialism and a concomitant emphasis upon measuring and improving performance (see chapter 1 in this volume). This new way of perceiving public services also gave rise to an ‘accounting logic,’ promoting a general perception that what is visible and quantifiable is what is important. However professional ‘outputs’ are not easily standardised and measurable:

‘In various guises, the key elements of the education reform ‘package’ – and it is applied with equal vigour to schools, colleges and universities - are embedded in three interrelated policy technologies: the market, managerialism and performativity.’ (Ball 2003)

As the role for the state has changed from provider to regulator, there has been the loss of a distinctive public sector. It is important not to suggest a ‘golden age’ of public sector administration. There are lots of criticisms that can be (and were) made, for example, issues of professional discretion and judgement, the lack of client consultation, the slow and weighty bureaucracy, the hierarchy and the lack of accountability. But the reforms leading to a change from public sector bureaucracy to managerialism have also affected the character, ethos, values and behaviour of individuals and organisations. Today the discussion of education focuses not so much on the transformations in peoples’ lives brought about by education, or the quality of their educational experiences, but the number of qualified students, the savings made in the delivery of services and the proportion of students going on into higher education.

The effects of neoliberalism on social justice and education

‘It is clear therefore that with increased market logic there is also an increase in democratic deficit and with it a reduction of the social justice agenda, especially in the public sector arena as new inequalities are created.’ (Lall and Nambissan 2011 p.7)
The effects of the reforms across the UK education sector have led to substantial change. The new policy discourse is restricting both for head teachers managing the schools and teachers in the classroom (Harris: 2007). With regard to schooling the focus has shifted to an instrumentalist thinking with measurable outputs. Schools aim to raise achievement in order to compete with each other through league tables. The influx of new educational providers such as academies has led to increased opportunities for students from poorer backgrounds to attend different types of schools. Nevertheless, as Roberts (2001 in Reay, 2006) argues, this transformation has created the illusion of a fairer society while it creates a stratification along the system which relegates the working classes to different trajectories than middle classes (Reay, 2006). The underlying assumption is that free markets allow parents to choose the school that aligns with their expectations and needs. The possibility of choosing a school would act as a natural selection process through which unpopular schools will be forced to change or to close if they do not adapt to clients expectations (Ball, 1993). However the rhetoric of choice assumes that all parents have equal cultural capital and are equally informed and capable of making such a choice for their children. The middle classes benefit whilst the lower classes have to make do with the leftovers (Leathwood, 2004; Reay, David and Ball, 2005). This has also affected those with Special Educational Needs, where a rhetoric of inclusive education has not resulted in equitable education provision for all. (See Chapter 3 in the volume)

There have been similar effects in the higher education sector: Marketisation across the sector has made performativity and accountability cornerstones of higher education policies today. Increasing the number of institutions has led to a stratified system with ‘first’ and ‘second class’ universities providing a different quality learning experience and catering to different sections of society. The pressure to increase the number of students, account for how time is spent and the general concern with national and international rankings are all effects of the changing understanding of what higher education stands for. The role of the university is no longer that of a ‘public interest institution’ but being sites of ‘knowledge production’ in light of the economic imperatives of the ‘knowledge economy.’ (see Chapter 4 in this volume)

*New Labour’s Britain*

‘The driving force of third way politics is globalisation.’ (Fairclough 2000, p.27)

The acceptance of New Labour’s vision of the neoliberal global economy underpinned third way politics. Chapter one will give a detailed analysis on how New Labour adopted neoliberalism and how the Third Way paved the way for market politics. It is however important to remember that the Third Way objectives
did not immediately mean a market centred approach. The neoliberal vision and rhetoric developed gradually over the three New Labour terms. The Third Way promised to tread a middle ground where social justice was not to be abandoned. In light of globalisation New Labour proposed to create a dynamic knowledge-based economy founded on individual empowerment and opportunity, where the government’s role was to support and the power of the market was to be harnessed to serve the public interest. A strong civil society would help enshrine rights and responsibilities and a modern government would be based on partnership and decentralisation (adapted from Blair, T., 1998). For education this meant increased investment, continued emphasis on human capital creation and the standards agenda as well as investment in higher education. Specialist schools, and school diversity was to be increased as well as parental involvement encouraged. Education services were to be privatised and business involvement encouraged, especially in disadvantaged areas. New Labour worked out partnership arrangements between the government, civil society and the private sector in areas which needed regeneration. New Deal for Communities as well as Education Action Zones were flagship programmes of the time.

New Labour’s time in office is characterised by two phenomena: a policy epidemic (Levin, 1998; Ball 2008) – in international convergence of ideas with an ever increasing number of texts appearing, focusing on the same themes of efficiency and effectiveness (especially but not limited to education); as well as a steady move of policies as well as education officials, senior civil servants and think tanks to the political right (Gibton, 2011). It can be argued that neoliberalism as a political and social ideology became a driver for an ever increasing number of policies which were developed under New Labour. The shift to a neoliberal hegemony happened by stealth as New Labour presented ‘consultation’ as a key to a participative mode of societal governance. Members of the public and civil society organisations were invited to be involved in policy consultation, creation and application. However ‘consultation’ was often sent out of schools or conducted just before the holidays. As Jones and Gammell (2009) observe, consultation is ‘far from an idyllic state of benign democracy with stakeholder organisations and the general public happily rejoicing that governments and quangos condescend to ask their opinions’ but a ‘half way house between mass participation... and the traditional way we always took important decisions.’ New Labour also relied on particular policy advisors, most of whom were not politicians, but people who were perceived as ‘stars’, such as Chris Woodhead and Michael Barber. Whose voice was being heard and whose were being ignored is often not taken into account when looking back at the consultation practice.

Policies are key instruments in helping the government establish the ‘common sense’ of the day. In order to unpick the move towards a neoliberal rhetoric in New Labour policy and to understand how the new hegemony was established, it is important to return to some key policy texts of the time. Only policy analysis will allow us to answer how the discourse differed from the practice on the ground and
how those who wrote the policies intended to convince the practitioners that their commitment to social justice was best served by an increasingly neoliberal agenda. In order to do this, each chapter applies the Policy Cycle as a theoretical and analytical framework to the chosen policy texts.

THE CHAPTERS

We think of education too often as simply school and higher education. This volume shows that education goes beyond these traditional spheres and also lies within youth work, medical education, creativity and the media. It was critical to cover areas outside of mainstream education in order to show how far education policy still impacts on society at large, even when not everyone is at an educational institution. Parents of course are affected by their children’s lives at school, as are those who are studying in Higher Education (HE). Teachers and lecturers are directly affected as well. However the inclusion of the medical curriculum raises questions with regard to the relationship we all have with our doctors and the issue of creativity and media influences anyone who watches TV, listens to the radio or reads a newspaper. The media of course is also used by policy makers to communicate, interpret and re-interpret policy. Today the media’s influence on political strategy and also on professional practice is greater than ever. The book’s purpose is to give sample policy texts to show the historical and political relevance of New Labour education policy to illustrate what went before them and what has followed. The contributors to this book combine their own professional experience and theoretical expertise in contemporary education policy, to make explicit these ideologies. They use recent examples of policy and practice within their own professional field seeking, through increased awareness, to widen the reader’s choice in action within their own settings and contexts.

The book’s opening chapter gives the historical and political backdrop of neoliberalism and subsequent chapters explore the field of policymaking in education under the New Labour government.

Chapter 1 - Grey Zones of the Market – Public Services, Education Policies and Neoliberal Reform in the United Kingdom by Julia Püschel and Boris Vormann covers the origins of neoliberalism, and the different theories and the linkages to contemporary public policy. Using Stephen Ball’s ‘Policy Cycle’ as an analytical tool this chapter examines the grey zones of neoliberal market theory with a particular emphasis on the UK model (Ball 1992). The first section outlines the basic tenets of neoliberal theory and examines its implications for public services and education policies. Based on the foundational texts of neoliberal theory (Friedman, van Hayek) – which, themselves, were produced in a specific, locatable context (context of influence) – they emphasise the historical and geo-political specificity of neoliberalisation processes – their context of policy text production. Public services and, more specifically, education policies appear as compromises in the free market model: as quasi-markets. After addressing the emergence of
neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse from the fringes of public policy debates and outlining its fundamental principles, they discuss the development of public services in the UK during the initial phase of ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism (Brenner et al. 2010). The second part of the chapter examines educational policies in the context of practice and context of outcomes. Drawing on neoliberal theory as posited in its foundational texts, as well as on real political shifts in the United Kingdom, two central categories are identified for an analytical assessment of educational policies and their contradictions: ‘Competition & Choice’ and ‘Managerial Re-Organisation.’

From there the volume moves on to youth work and the role of education in creating citizenship.

In Chapter 2 – Young people’s engagement in society: how Government policy has ignored the role of youth work in citizenship education Kathy Edmonds takes as a focus a critical analysis of part of the Governance of Britain Green Paper ‘Britain’s future: the citizen and the state’ (2007), on citizenship and national identity; in particular young people’s engagement in society. Government policy is focussed on the delivery of citizenship education only through schools. Edmonds concern is that if the government is serious about enabling young people’s engagement in society as “active citizens” and encouraging them to vote, then why is the audience for this education policy selected only through formal education, namely schools and teachers? Where is the voice of youth work and young people? The chapter examines whose voice has been heard and who has influenced the agenda on citizenship, whilst identifying any gaps, and exploring why very few youth work professionals or practitioners get to have a say in the creation of policy, yet are expected to deliver and implement policy initiatives. The chapter explores the perceived lack of representation of youth work, starting with an overview of the concept of citizenship and its role in political literacy; and highlighting the differences in understanding between those on the right and left of the political spectrum on what being an “active citizen” means. The role of informal education through youth work looks at the characteristics of this style of work; whilst citizenship in practice looks at how policy is enacted or addressed. The literature reviewed identifies different models and changes to practice, from top down to bottom up, which can, through including youth worker’s and young people in the discussion on citizenship education, impact on improved access and participation for young people; leading, Edmonds believes, to an improved relationship between society and young people.

From there the book moves into schools, looking in particular at children with special educational needs and how they have been affected by the changing policy rhetoric. Again this was chosen as being a less ‘visible’ policy effect, yet one which should be a central concern for anyone concerned with social justice.

In Chapter 3 – Special Education Needs and inclusion – a critical appraisal Theo Tambi explores the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, the key New Labour policy for inclusive education. To date, SENDA 2001 is arguably the single most important pieces of legislation underpinning the provision
of services for learners experiencing disabilities and difficulties. This high level of importance is also matched by the level of controversies and, sometimes, contradictions associated with this legislation. One of the trends in special education studies today is the growing gap between policy and practice or between rhetoric and reality. This implies that the introduction of SENDA in 2001 does not mean that all the policy objectives have been accomplished. The policy analysis focuses on how the text reflects the neoliberal agenda of the day. The chapter argues that SENDA 2001 as a policy has its roots in a Conservative agenda, but was realised by Labour. It is inferred here that unless policy is analysed in this rigorous fashion, a lot of misjudgement and misappropriation of effort would be incurred in attempts to improve educational provision for learners experiencing disabilities and difficulties.

Higher education has been a key policy debate under New Labour, especially the Widening Participation agenda which shows that so many more students now have access to HE. However the claims remain contested and in Chapter 4 - Widening Participation in Higher Education and Social Class - The 'mystery' of unchanging levels of engagement. Irene Brew-Riverson analyses part of the DFES 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education', which deals with the expansion of Higher Education to meet the needs of the United Kingdom (UK). The promotion of Foundation Degrees as viable and supposedly valuable alternative higher education qualifications is a central part of the analysis. The key policy discourse of widening access is presented as one that has resulted in the increased participation of students from professional backgrounds - eighty percent study for a degree (Galindo-Rueda cited in Reay, David and Ball, 2005) whilst only fifteen percent of people from unskilled backgrounds are so engaged. The issue of a more appropriate 'habitus' (Bourdieu cited in Bowl, 2003) for middle and upper class families is cited as one of the reasons for the continuing improvements in engagement amongst the privileged to the disadvantage of those less privileged. The positioning of students as consumers in the higher education market place with the responsibility for their own success (Leathwood, 2003) is interrogated in the light of the fundamental lack of a level playing field because of the complexities that characterise the lives of many non-traditional entrants into the higher education sphere. The Labour Government's neoliberal stance is presented as an abdication of responsibility from a social -justice perspective on issues such as the payment of tuition fees and the kinds of institutions available to those from more non-traditional backgrounds. The concept of stakeholder analysis using the dimensions of power and interest (Mendelow, 1991 cited in Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2006) is used to critically examine the political context within which policy is developed. It sheds light upon the reason why some stakeholder voices are not articulated. The chapter ends with an analysis of the effects of Lord Browne’s review and proposals for the HE sector.

The book now moves on to policy in relation to creativity in business and on the curriculum for medical undergraduates, and the impact in H.E. In Chapter 5 –
Education, Creativity and the Media: an analysis of the ideology of the Cox Review

Stephen Colwell analyses the ideological stance of the Cox Review of Creativity in Business. He also uses Schumpeter’s analysis of the decline of capitalism and a contemporary reading of Hegelian Historicism to argue that the elevation of the ‘global competition narrative’ and the promotion of business as the primary source of policy wisdom, direction and management of creativity represents a rationale that legitimises contingent and, by extension, de-legitimises absolute individual creative autonomy. He argues that by 2005 New Labour had moved decisively from its initial approach of encouraging creativity as a social good to fully embrace neoliberal hegemonic rationality expressed in an exploitation model of power relationships between ‘Creatives’ and Business articulated by the Cox Review. Colwell argues that Cox represents an ideology that potentially drives out those things that cannot be justified in commercial terms and articulates an entrenchment of subordination of the individual which shifts an already unequal power relationship decisively in favour of established commercial and political elites that advance a neoliberal agenda. Within this context the implications for Communication Media are explored with specific regard for the importance of individual autonomy for the functioning of a democratic public sphere.

In Chapter 6 - The Industrialisation of Medical Education? Dr. Sophie Park, a medical doctor, presents a critical analysis of the most recent revision of Tomorrow’s Doctors (TD), published by the General Medical Council (GMC) in September 2009. TD details the curriculum to be taught throughout all undergraduate medical schools in the UK and is likely to have further impact internationally. In defining the curriculum (and indeed to what extent this is made explicit and standardised), this policy has enormous power both in its choices of delivery and content, to define the nature and purpose of medical education and evolving forms of ‘professionalism’. The chapter begins by describing the relationships between various stakeholders involved in the consultation process and policy construction. It outlines the role of the General Medical Council (GMC) and explores competing perspectives on the curricula’s core values and components for patients, the profession, and students. The changing nature of the NHS as employer and as a resource for medical education amid wider political change and privatisation is also discussed. Using Ball’s context of influence, the chapter then seeks to critique the principles and qualities of some evolving and existing discourses which have shaped the new TD document. Using Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘linguistic philosophy’ to explore the nature and function of language, the chapter next uses textual examples from consultation and TD policy material, to highlight examples of neoliberal influence and discusses how this might change the nature and definition of medical professionalism, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Finally, Park uses the context of political strategy to propose a breath for reflection, urging the reader to make a conscious choice in their use of language to support a particular discourse and hegemony
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within their professional context. While acknowledging Aristotle’s dilemma between the abstract and particular nature of policy, or phronesis, this chapter urges readers to resist the temptation to over-stipulate the possible aspects of the particular, at the expense of facilitating space for the lesser-known, but essential aspects of professional practice.

In the Afterword Mike Apple assesses how professionals in the public sector can challenge the widening gap between the ruling class and the masses by replacing the language of the market with the language of equity, democracy and inclusivity.

What the chapters and the policies they analyse divulge is that New Labour did nothing to reverse the trends that had been set in motion in the 1980s. In fact the reforms set Britain on a neoliberal road. Whilst having to appeal to a middle ground of voters over the last 20 odd years, it is evident that the increased comfort and wealth of the middle classes, who have supported the Third Way, have left the voices of those less fortunate unheard. Consequently the effects of New Labour’s policies on the social justice agenda have been catastrophic, paving the way for the new conservative/lib dem coalition which echoes the Thatcher/Reagan politics of the 1970’s and 80’s with cuts to public services, the dismantling of the welfare state, the privatisation of key services such as education and health and the demise of collective opposition through Trade Unions.

This book provides a valuable review of the processes and time when British policy was being transformed. It is needed at this time as academia is being indoctrinated by the performativity driven culture, no longer allowing the space and time for the kind of in depth text analysis which is essential for the understanding of political and social trends and movements. It behoves us to raise questions that will provoke more thinking as to why the obvious reasons may not be the only ones behind, for example, the lack of social mobility and the yawning gap between the have and have-nots in our society. Now is the time when educators, practitioners and policy makers need to be encouraged to move away from the prescriptive policy of neoliberalism, with its limited opportunities for social relations and the ‘loss of public space for democratic interchange’ (Monahan, 2005:152, in Ball, 2008) and to take up the challenge, of working together, with education as a dialogue between people and communities (Apple, 2006).

NOTES

1 Neoliberalism is increasingly making headway in Asia as well. For an example on the effects of globalisation and neoliberalism on India see Lall and Nambissan (2011).
REFERENCES:


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1. GREY ZONES OF THE MARKET

Public Services, Education Policies, and Neoliberal Reform in the United Kingdom

Beginning in the late 1970s, the restructuring of public services in general and the reform of education systems in particular has been the object of policy initiatives in most North Atlantic countries. Following the legitimation crisis of the Fordist-Keynesian mode of regulation, national governments have sought to prioritise the market as an instrument for economic distribution and accumulation (Bonal 2003). The objective of minimising public expenditures under the constraints of fiscal austerity as well as under the impact of a new free-market orthodoxy have led to a re-casting of the role of the state in the provision and funding of public services (Dale 2000). The creation of a ‘small, strong state’ – to view unfold from afar the new ethos of choice, freedom, and competitiveness – has produced its own contradictions (Gamble 1988, Sassen 2006). Particularly in those fields where the neoliberal ideal of free markets could only be approximated by “quasi-markets” (Levačić 1995), schisms between public rhetoric and social reality become most obvious.

Using Stephen Ball's ‘Policy Cycle’ as an analytical tool this chapter examines the grey zones of neoliberal market theory with a particular emphasis on the UK model (Ball 1992). The first section outlines the basic tenets of neoliberal theory and examines its implications for public services and education policies. Based on the foundational texts of neoliberal theory (Friedman, van Hayek) – which, themselves, were produced in a specific, locatable context (context of influence) – we emphasise the historical and geo-political specificity of neoliberalisation processes, their context of policy text production. Public services and, more specifically, education policies appear as compromises in free market theory – as quasi-markets. After addressing the emergence of neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse from the fringes of public policy debates and outlining its fundamental principles, we discuss the development of public services in the UK during the initial phase of ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism (Brenner et al. 2010). The second part of the chapter examines educational policies in the context of practice and context of outcomes. Drawing on neoliberal theory as posited in its foundational texts, as well as on real political shifts in the United Kingdom, two central categories
are identified for an analytical assessment of educational policies and their contradictions: ‘Competition & Choice’ and ‘Managerial Re-Organisation.’

THE HISTORICITY OF NEOLIBERAL THEORY

In contrast to ‘globalisation processes’ – an analytical category to grasp the historical rise in the mobility of people, goods, capital and information as well as the relativisation of nation-state power – neoliberalism is best conceptualised as a set of theoretical assumptions about individuals and society which envisions and asserts a certain role for the political vis-à-vis an abstract and seemingly universal category: the market. Despite its claims for universality, the theoretical fundament on which neoliberalism rests is deeply grounded in history, building largely on 19th century English free-trade and laissez-faire economics (Palley 2004, 1). The dominance of liberalism waned in the 20th century when the size of government was considerably enlarged due to the drastic setbacks of the Great Depression that suddenly unveiled the shortcomings of unregulated markets. Advocating a more active role of the state in stabilising the economy by stimulating and managing aggregate demand with macroeconomic tools, the theories of John Maynard Keynes set up the frame for Fordist growth after World War II. Based on a nexus of mass consumption and mass production, economic growth in Europe and North America rested on a compromise between capital and labour which found its institutional materialisation in the Welfare State. With the disintegration of the Fordist model that resulted from a slowdown in productivity growth and the failure of reconciling high profit rates and high wages during the 1970s, a more conservative strand gained momentum (see Eichengreen 2007: 252; Brenner & Theodore 2008: 2f.).

It is important to underline that the surge of neoliberalism from the fringes of public policy debates was historically contingent. Some methodological clarifications might be useful at this point. The notion of contextual determinancy, which goes beyond a simple binary concept of structure and agency, guides our methodological framework for this chapter. We use Stephen Ball’s ‘Policy Cycle’ as a matrix for our argument. In a first step, we discern the ‘context of influence’ in order to identify the central struggles for the emergence of the neoliberal discourse as the hegemonic paradigm, and examine how these ideological presuppositions are translated in situational contexts of policy text production. The second part of this chapter deals with different contexts of practice, mainly by outlining parallels and divergences of Conservative and New Labour policies, leading to partially contradictory contexts of outcomes and, an aspect we analyse to a lesser degree, contexts of political strategy (Bowe, Ball & Gold 1992; Ball 1994; Lall 2007).

The context of influence of neoliberalism’s foundational texts is reflected in their key presumptions. Some of neoliberalism’s underlying suppositions can only
be identified as such if one takes into account the context in which they came to undermine the Fordist compromise of capital and labour. Gaining wide-spread influence only in the crises of the 1970s, Friedrich August van Hayek’s 1944 book ‘the Road to Serfdom’ was an acrimonious criticism of totalitarianism and of what he saw as a tendency of socialism: a drift into despotism. In the Cold War context, Milton Friedman’s understanding of ‘Capitalism and Freedom’ (1962), was influenced by his deep-seated mistrust for central planning and government intervention. Like van Hayek, Friedman understood the market as a superior means of coordinating interests – a rationale that stresses the inevitable lack of knowledge of central planners. Not only did governments seem to assume responsibilities that curtailed individual freedom: they endangered democracy through the centralisation of both political and economic power. In England, Friedman’s arguments were echoed in pamphlets published by authors of the New Right who deemed the market the “best device for registering individual preferences and allocating resources to satisfy them” (Harris & Seldon 1979, 5 cited in Gewirtz 2002, 9). In sum, these pamphleteers highlighted the notion of consumer sovereignty as their prime guiding principle (Gewirtz 2002, 9).

Harking back to Mendeville’s fable of the bee, to utilitarian conceptions of the rational, utility-maximizing actor, and to Adam Smith’s classical notion of the ‘invisible hand’, van Hayek, Friedman, and other neoliberal proponents consequently refuted the role that Keynes had assigned to the state, and reemphasised the perils of state-power and the paramount importance of (economic and individual) freedom (Palley 2004, 4). Resulting from these considerations, a set of economic policies was moulded into a theory of neoliberalism that needs to be viewed as the point of origin for the production of policy texts and that David Harvey defines as

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\text{[\ldots] a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (Harvey 2005, 2)}
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What is described by the notion of neoliberalisation processes, then, is an increased reliance on the market in the most diverse fields of social practice; a shift in the public-private divide toward the latter (Sassen 2006). More precisely this has meant the liberalisation of trade, the privatisation of publicly owned companies and the deregulation of financial, labour and product markets.

This line of thought gained momentum when Friedrich August von Hayek and Milton Friedman won the Nobel Prize in 1974 and 1976 respectively, when American think tanks pushed for the neoliberal revolution, and when the crises of the 1970s (OPEC oil crisis, stagflation, fiscal austerity) called into question the meaningfulness of Keynesian economic policies and urged for alternatives. In the British context, the education system was seen as both a symptom of and, as we
discuss further below, an antidote to these crises. More deep-seated structural adjustment problems arising in the midst of economic restructuring and post-Fordist, global production systems had redirected attention toward the education system (Gewirtz 2002, 10f.).

The successful imposition of neoliberal strategies in the United Kingdom and the United States under Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan – the neoliberal roll-back of Keynesian institutions – is a story similarly well-documented and analysed as is the international projection of neoliberal doctrine through powerful institutions and organisations (Brenner et al. 2010, Harvey 2005). Rather than to its historical trajectory, however, we should pay closer attention to the implications that neoliberalism bears for the role of government. This is not only a theoretical task, although neoliberal ideology suggests that its truth claims are universally verifiable, as Pierre Bourdieu has argued and as can be witnessed in the all-out reliance on the market as a neutral, unhistorical and efficient instrument for resource allocation (Bourdieu 1998). Neoliberalisation processes are determined in the political field – in the contexts of policy text production and the context of practice – even though the retrenchment of the state creates constraints that, in turn, delimit the state’s capacity to act. The precise form of neoliberalism’s ‘ecological dominance’, as Jessop and Sum put it, has depended just as much on extra-economic factors such as political culture, pre-existing institutions, and historical power relations (Jessop & Sum 2006, 284). In sum, neoliberal development has been contested and institutional settings have created local and national path dependencies for its trajectory.

While the ‘state’ has a certain (clearly limited) role in neoliberal theory, its function in different political landscapes can differ quite dramatically. It suffices to point to the different Welfare traditions of the decentralised Anglo-Saxon, ‘liberal’ systems, and the centralised, ‘corporatist-statist’ Welfare types in continental Europe (Esping-Andersen 1990), or, for that matter, to the different educational traditions (McLean 1995, Karsten 1999) in order to understand the concept of ‘variegated neoliberalisation’ (Brenner et al. 2010). While a state’s point of origin differs – and hence does its development under neoliberalism – its new role denotes a re-orientation in a new context of liberalised global competition. The ‘competitive state,’ to use Cerny’s (1997) terminology, has to “facilitate a regulative framework in which the national economy can compete in the international market [...]” (Bonal 2003, 163).

The Welfare State, developed in the context of a national totality, has come under attack in globalisation processes that re-direct the efforts and objectives of societies with a view to the global as the “broadest horizon of action” (Jessop 2003, 4). International competitiveness becomes the central determining goal of public and economic policy leading to a commodification of those elements of the public realm that had been shielded from global market forces during the Fordist era, such as public health, education, and infrastructure (Cerny 1997). International
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competitiveness, as Xavier Bonal argues, has been achieved “by developing internal competitive modes of governance” so that the “[d]istribution of goods and services and modes of public administration are now guided by the adoption of market mechanisms within the state” (Bonal 2003, 163).

In the provision or financing of these goods and services, the role of the state also differs according to the challenge at hand. It should not be forgotten that despite the ideal of marketisation, the neoliberal state, too, is tacitly supposed to meet a plethora of tasks. Its fundamental role is that of providing an institutional framework guaranteeing “the quality and integrity of money,” as well as the functioning of the market and to set up those “military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights” (Harvey 2005, 2). In addition to these tasks, the neoliberal state has assumed a new role as a coordinator for the provision of public goods and services – the grey zones of market theory and neoliberalism.

Public Services and ‘Market Failures’

Public goods and services are broadly defined as serving a ‘public interest.’ In this understanding it is the purpose – serving the ‘public interest’ – that is essential, not the provider which can generally be either, the government or private actors (see e.g. OECD 2008). The duties and capacities of the Welfare State are, themselves, by no means clearly defined – and depend as much on the pre-existing (institutionalized) political culture of a society as on the degree of importance attributed to the market after neoliberal reform. As public goods and services are commonly defined by their objective, and not the apparatus of provision: what exactly constitutes a public interest? Obviously, a definition is subject to debate. As Newman and Clarke have noted, “things, sites, people, ideas […] are not permanently or intrinsically public: their construction as public matters involves political struggles to make them so” and, as a consequence, certain goods and services “may also be de-publicised, and de-politicised” (Newman and Clarke 2009, 3).

Agreeing that a certain good or service does serve a public interest does not imply an agreement on the appropriate organisational design for providing this good or service. According to Adam Smith’s notion of the ‘invisible hand,’ markets can be an efficient mechanism of provision – justifying their superiority in the allocation of resources in many fields. However, in the case of so-called market failures, necessary assumptions of the first and second theorems of welfare economics – which express the belief in the efficiency of market allocations – are violated. In other words, for these specific cases, unregulated markets are not the most adept mode of resource allocation so that state intervention is justified. Generally, market failures are presumed to include externalities, information asymmetries, market power, and public goods – which are often interrelated.
In order to overcome these failures governments can make use of various instruments such as state ownership and public procurement, regulation and subsidies. Let us briefly look at those types of market failure that will re-appear in our discussion of neoliberal education reform that is \textit{externalities}, and \textit{information asymmetries}. \textit{Externalities} are benefits or costs that occur to a third party which did not engage in an economic transaction. Thus, the overall benefits or costs are not fully reflected in prices and the market mechanism fails.\textsuperscript{8} Another assumption for the efficient operation of (perfectly competitive) markets is that of complete information. Buyers and sellers are aware of all relevant pieces of information about the quality and the price of the product. However, in reality there are often \textit{information asymmetries}, with one party knowing more than the other party, which hampers informed decisions and consequently contradicts the notion of a rational actor (Stiglitz 2000, 80f.).\textsuperscript{9}

Although these market failures are widely acknowledged, handling them has remained a matter of interpretation and creed. The Great Depression of the 1930s has generally shifted political opinion towards greater acknowledgement of market failures. This broad consensus started to erode during the late 1960s. A set of theoretical and, more importantly, empirical contributions from economic and political scientists at the University of Chicago, which we have already referred to, increasingly cast doubt on the taken-for-granted notion of the ‘benevolent dictator.’ Public officials, too, started to be seen as individual utility-maximisers in public choice theory, so that the possibility of government failures through conflicting individual interests was highlighted. From this vantage point, it would depend on the assumed scope of each failure, whether government intervention in ‘failing’ markets would actually enhance efficiency (Stiglitz 2000, 6f.). While these arguments have, indeed, led to caricature postures, pitting market fanaticism against state-adhering doctrine,\textsuperscript{10} in practice, the UK Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s as well as New Labour, have leaned toward the former stance, taking the predominant view of strongly criticising the inefficiency and inertia of government bureaucracy (Clark 2002, 774f.).

Despite the elusiveness of the concept of the public interest and how it can be attained, discursive tendencies in longer historical periods can be more readily identified so that notions of what is ‘public’ and what is not become more visible when we contrast different contexts of policy text production, i.e. Keynesian vs. Post-Fordist, or different contexts of practice, i.e. specific government agendas. This is true, also, for the analysis of developments in the United Kingdom.

Famously – or notoriously, depending on political taste – Margaret Thatcher claimed that there “is no such thing as society, only individual men and women and their families.” Accordingly, the scope of what was understood to constitute a public interest was relatively narrow and provision and funding of previously public goods and services was ‘rolled back’ during the Thatcher era (Brenner et al. 2010). Martin McLean and Natalia Voskresenskaya have emphasised ‘privatisation’ as a central component of Thatcher’s approach to reform. It is worth
quoting their assessment in full length as it succinctly links political orientations to policy action under Thatcher:

Privatization involved ‘rolling back’ the state by disbanding agencies in the economic spheres, including nationalized productive enterprises such as gas and electricity, and reducing the power of allocation over social benefits in health, education, public housing, and legal services of inter-mediary ‘gatekeeping’ bodies. Individual choice was to be paramount as constraints on direct dealings between consumers and producers were removed. (McLean & Voskresenskaya 1992, 76f.)

The emphasis on privatization as well as the significant impact of public choice theory in Thatcher’s policy decisions has contributed to the general perception of the United Kingdom as a “classic case of doctrinaire neoliberalism” (Clark 2002, 774). Under New Labour the commitment to the social and the ‘public’ resurged, at least rhetorically. This was mirrored in a different approach towards public goods and services with the public interest being, again, defined in broader terms. This putative re-expansion of the public, however, did not signify a return to ‘Old Labour,’ to socialist principles, or to the model of the Keynesian Welfare State. The “modernizing government” initiative under Tony Blair’s government explicitly emphasised market efficiency, consumer choice, and competition in its reform of public services (Clark 2002, 775).

The new pro-market stance and rhetoric stressing government failure has created a new approach to these grey zones of the market – which is by no means as clear-cut as it might seem. A cacophony of key terms has held the public policy debate hostage since the first reforms in the 1980s. Newman and Clarke list “[…] efficiency and effectiveness, activation, personalisation, partnership, markets, social enterprise, social justice, choice, citizens, consumers, good governance, contestability, globalization, devolution, localism, the public service ethos, multiculturalism, diversity and inequality” as the buzzwords of neoliberal public service reform (Newman & Clarke 2009, 8f.). Depending on political backgrounds these terms have been combined in improbable ways: “for example, when contestability, competition and choice are seen to address diverse needs, remedy inequality and promote social justice.” (Newman & Clarke 2009, 8) The Third Way, which New Labour has taken under Tony Blair, has found its own way of recombining these concepts and approaches. As Blair stated “choice must be extended ‘from the few to the many’ as part of a politics of egalitarianism.” (Newman & Clarke 2009, 8f.) What New Labour, in its specific inflection of neoliberal reform, has done was to re-imagine the public as a “diverse public” including “different ‘communities’, different cultures, and different socio-demographic groups who may have different interests” (Clarke 2004, 39). New Labour’s affirmation of difference and its stance on the citizen-as-consumer – a continuation from the Conservative governments – have reshuffled the public’s
understanding of its interest with an outspoken emphasis on marketisation, consumer choice, and community responsibility.

The ‘big society’ as envisioned by the coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats that took power in May 2010 can in many ways be seen as an extension of neoliberal reform strategies taken in the public sector since the 1980s. In the very same month in 2010, the BBC reported that Prime Minister Cameron regarded the state as “‘often too inhuman and clumsy’” to “tackle the country’s social problems.” (BBC 2010) In the course of his electoral campaign and upon his accession as Prime Minister, Cameron praised instead the ‘big society,’ “based around encouraging greater personal and family responsibility and community activism” (BBC 2010). Michael R. Krätke, a German commentator has called the measures instituted in 2010 the “most drastic austerity package in British history” (Krätke 2010, 13). Public investments on the local and community level have been cut by 100 and 74 percent respectively – and while elementary and secondary education seems to be spared from cutbacks (except for the reduction of investments in school buildings), financial state support for higher education has been reduced by 40 percent and the budget for research has been frozen (Krätke 2010, 14).

The following section fleshes out the assumptions underlying these latest developments in education reform in the United Kingdom and looks more precisely at the contexts of outcomes as well as contradictory policy strategies, with a primary focus on New Labour. As in public services in general, continuities and changes of the Third Way vis-à-vis the politics of roll-back neoliberalism under Thatcher can be outlined. In order to understand the particular inflections of policies since New Labour – which we analyse with an emphasis on the two key aspects ‘Competition & Choice,’ and ‘Managerial Re-Organisation’ – we need to remind ourselves that education policies and systems are intimately connected to factors such as a given (national and international) economic structure and division of labour, world beliefs and ideology, as well as pedagogical and didactic trends – in other words, their specific historical and logical contexts.

NEOLIBERAL EDUCATION REFORM

In Europe and North America, the role assigned to education has changed quite significantly over the course of the past three centuries – and so has the role of state policies vis-à-vis the education system. From Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Emile – granting age-appropriate education for young boys and viewing children as distinct from adults – to the beginnings of mass education in the 19th century, education always implied a historical world view and was, in this sense, always political. While Rousseau’s pupil was supposed to develop into a mature, rational adult, ready to thrive in ‘civilisation’ and to enter a social contract to provide political stability for society, mass education in public
school systems established by the state was a means of achieving social cohesion amidst the societal upheavals of industrial capitalism. As an instrument of discursive power, school book historiography cemented the fragmentary tendencies of modernity and spread the founding myths and ‘invented traditions’ of the nation-state, while at the same time primary education – literacy and calculus – created a flexible and individualised national labour force, capable of running the industrial machinery (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Gellner 2006).

At the turn of the 20th century, mass education was extended beyond primary schooling in order to enhance the economic productivity of the work force. In Western industrial nations, most notably the United States, Britain and Germany, Claudia Goldin notes, the “novel concern […] was that post literacy training could make the ordinary office worker, bookkeeper, stenographer, retail clerk, machinist, mechanic, shop-floor worker, and farmer more productive, and that it could make the difference between an economic leader and a laggard.” (Goldin 2001, 264) This new emphasis was followed by a geo-political restructuring of societies in the last two decades of the 20th century – commonly referred to as a new wave of ‘globalisation,’ a partial de-construction of the nation-state and a transition to a ‘knowledge-based’ economy – which has instigated yet another view of the role and purpose of education.

The crises of the Keynesian model in Western industrialised countries during the 1970s led to the questioning of a political consensus about education policies which had been forged roughly a decade earlier. In 1962, even under a Conservative government, British local authorities were still obliged to pay for full-time students’ tuition fees and to financially support their living expenses (Bates 2010). By contrast, in the mid-1980s, the widespread ideal of the “malleable society,” the notion that equality of outcomes could be approximated, most notably through the positive impacts of “constructive” mass education, was jettisoned and, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, replaced by “more economically oriented educational management theories” (Karsten 1999, 307). From the Keynesian state which assumed the “full responsibility for the protection of national citizens” emerged the neoliberal state where international competitive advantage was matched by internal flexibilisation (Bonal 2003, 162f.).

With regards to primary and secondary education, Sjoerd Karsten has noted a discursive shift that occurred in the mid-1980s in Dutch scholarly and professional debates from an interest in pupils’ “equality of opportunity” to their “performances,” and, what is more than that, to the performance of schools (Karsten 1999, 307f.). In contrast to the Netherlands, debates in the UK as well as in the United States and Western Germany took an even more decisive neoliberal orientation during that time. There, a new discourse on the implementation of “market-type mechanisms” (e.g. school fees, inter-school competition, shift to private education, school choice), and the reinforcement of traditional values and
classroom discipline (especially under Thatcher’s national curricula) emerged (Karsten 1999, 309).

In higher education, ‘globalisation’ urged national governments to re-position their work force through an educational expansion. This happened in the light of a new appreciation of ‘knowledge’ – the notion that the “most important economic development of our lifetime has been the rise of a new system for creating wealth, based no longer on muscle but on mind” (Toffler 1990, 9). Universities were seen as key drivers in this new type of economy, the ‘knowledge economy,’ and around the globe higher education expanded even more strongly than primary and secondary education (Olssen & Peters 2005). In industrialised countries, college and university education lost its elitist exclusivity over the course of the 20th century and, at least in theory, it became universally accessible (Altbach 2005, 20). As a consequence of this global expansion of education systems, while in 1900, approximately 500,000 students were profiting from higher education world-wide, in 2011, roughly 1.8 million students were enrolled in higher education in the United Kingdom alone (Schofer & Meyer 2005; British Council 2011). In knowledge-based economies, where, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “the production, diffusion and use of technology and information are key to economic activity and sustainable growth” (OECD 1999, 7), education has become an economic product, to be exchanged on the global market place.¹³

Depending on the context of practice, neoliberal reforms of education systems, both in primary/secondary and higher education have centred on a series of core themes. They include the expansion of market elements in the education sector, an emphasis on choice and competition as well as the decentralisation of educational bureaucracies through the devolution of responsibilities to other scales and entities – while at the same time the state has expanded its role of administering and managing education from a distance (Whitty et al. 1998, 3). In our categorisation of neoliberal education reform, which discusses these trends in detail, we conceptually distinguish primary/secondary education and higher education because of their different role in and for society. We also discern a causal, reciprocal relationship between neoliberal policies, as the dominant mode of globalisation since the 1980s, and their results; the interplay of neoliberal principles, policy, and performance.

The common denominator in this development is efficiency and the belief that the public interest could be achieved at lower costs by reducing bureaucratic intervention. Two key aspects of neoliberal education reform are highlighted, which characterise – as defining moments or as inevitable and sometimes even contradictory by-products – the pursuit of efficiency by schools and institutions of higher education. The section ‘Competition & Choice’ examines the logic of increased competition in primary/secondary and higher education and contrasts it to unintended outcomes, namely the potential persistence of stratification, whereas the section ‘Managerial Re-Organisation’ analyses the retrenchment of the state,
the coinciding increase in performance-testing, and the contradictory consequences vis-à-vis New Labour’s concept of diversity.

*Competition & Choice*

Milton Friedman argued for the introduction of more educational choice and competition in order to improve the efficiency of the education system. His idea was that ‘producers,’ in this case educational institutions, would have an incentive to improve and innovate in order to provide their services at the lowest costs possible and/or the highest quality because ‘consumers’ would otherwise opt for another ‘product.’ At the same time, the ‘paternalistic’ state could be held at bay (Friedman 1962, 103-105). In many education systems, *competition* between educational institutions for ‘customers’ has hence been introduced by coupling the funding received to the number of pupils/students attracted (*per capita* funding). According to this rationale, educational institutions would become “more responsive to their clients and either […] more effective or go to the wall.” (Whitty & Power 2000, 97f.) In the 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales, which took effect in 1989, schools’ funding was similarly coupled to the number of ‘customers’ they attract so that “schools were effectively reconfigured as small businesses […].” (Gewirtz 2002, x)

In contrast to primary and secondary education, the striving for competitiveness in higher education transcended national borders. In a quasi-market driven by global forces, universities began to compete not only for students from the region or nation, but have attempted to attract more and more foreign students (Arnove, 2003, 2, cited in Denman 2005, 13). This has had quantifiable consequences: While in 1980, 56,003 international students were enrolled at universities in the United Kingdom, the number leaped from 77,800 to 197,188 from 1990 to 1994 and to 213,000 in 1999 (Welch 2001, 479). According to the OECD, this trend continued in the 2000s, when the number of non-citizen students enrolled in the United Kingdom constantly climbed from 364,271 in 2004 to 462,609 in 2008 (OECD 2011).¹⁴

In this system of increased competition, the question of who was to provide the funds for education has been at the core of numerous debates. Different views on the necessity of public funding have depended largely on the assumed private and social benefits from education. Proponents of a higher degree of private funding have tended to emphasise the private benefits of education. This view was intricately linked to certain expectations of the curriculum: If “employability” and “economic productivity” of competitive, rational actors, was to be the key goal, education would need to shift its focus from “developing the well-rounded liberally educated person” and to be “more concerned with developing the skills required for a person to become an economically productive member of society.” (Hursh
2005, 5) Yet, if employability was the main objective, then why not marketise the entire education system, including primary and secondary education?

The reason that even Milton Friedman acknowledged is that education can incur positive externalities which yield social benefits beyond private returns. The relation between private and social benefits from education is usually seen to differ along the distinction between lower and higher education. In primary and secondary education social benefits, such as the promotion of social cohesion, are generally accepted to be of more importance than private ones. As, in higher education, private benefits tend to be seen as relatively more important, a lower level of public funding seems justified from this perspective. Following Milton Friedman, then, the state should play a smaller role in funding higher education, especially with regards to vocational and professional schooling:

It [vocational and professional schooling] is a form of investment in human capital precisely analogous to investment in machinery, buildings, or other forms of non-human capital. Its function is to raise the economic productivity of the human being. If it does so, the individual is rewarded in a free enterprise society by receiving a higher return for his services than he would otherwise be able to command. (Friedman 1962, 100f.)

In addition to private returns from higher education, proponents of private funding have argued that public funding collected from taxes would redistribute “[…] resources from low income to (future) high income taxpayers and is therefore regressive.” (Greenaway & Haynes 2003, 160) This argument is based on the demographic composition of students and the observation that mainly students from high-income families attend universities (Greenaway & Hayes 2003, 155).

Along these lines, the New Labour government introduced means-tested tuition fees for universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1998.11 Tuition fees replaced public funding and were initially set at £1,000 per annum. They were not allowed to differ across universities, subjects or students (Greenaway & Hayes 2003, 161). However, it turned out that the resulting amount of funding was not sufficient and that it led to the “[…] steady impoverishment of universities […]” (Desai 2005, xiii). Therefore, in a second step of privatisation, the Higher Education Bill 2004 replaced the system of fixed tuition fees (which in the meantime had augmented to £1,125 per annum) with one of variable fees between £0 and £3,000. This system was supplemented by loans provided by the government, which had to be paid back once a student earned more than £15,000 a year (Bates 2010). Even more recently, in December 2010, the maximum fee was increased to £9,000 per annum (Mulholland 2010).

In a nutshell, there is a strong consensus, also in the political reality of the United Kingdom today, that primary and secondary education produces positive externalities, while higher education is a matter of private decision that should
consequently be paid out of private pockets. While Milton Friedman agreed that additional schooling was, indeed, “a way of providing better social and political leadership,” in other words, while it did have positive externalities (Friedman 1962, 88), he highlighted that “[a]t successively higher levels, there is less and less agreement” about the “appropriate content of an educational program for citizens of a democracy” (Friedman 1962, 98).

If we shift our focus to choice, as the necessary correlate of competition, we can identify certain unintended outcomes and contradictions in educational reform policies. Parental and student choice, as we have mentioned, was supposed to indicate the quality of a given institution. In addition to furthering competition and quality, however, the emphasis on parental choice was also believed to target inequalities. School choice was perceived by many as a prerogative of richer parents as they could have their children enrolled in private schools. If parents were given vouchers, it was argued, parents could send their children into the schools they best saw fit (Thaler & Sunstein 2009, 201).

The same logic dominated arguments in the United Kingdom during the 1980s. There, open enrolment was reinforced through the Education Reform Act of 1988 which redefined “parents as consumers, who – at least in principle – were given the right to choose a school for their child, rather than be allocated one by local authority bureaucrats.” (Gewirtz 2002, x) Prior to 1988 pupils had been placed in schools largely according to the area they lived in. British Conservative politician Kenneth Clarke saw this as an advantage to middle- and higher-income families and called this ‘selection by mortgage’ because the demand for houses in areas with ‘good’ schools was mirrored in higher house prices.

However, if we examine this particular case more precisely, we can see that ‘open enrolment’ after 1988 perpetuated rather than mitigated social injustice – not just despite of the move toward the market, but precisely because of it. Even after 1988, schools retained the right to ultimately select their applicants. As a school’s test results have also been based on the performance of its students – perhaps more so than on its management – stratification of pupils by ability has persisted. Put differently, choice has existed more for some than for others. For various reasons, the way choice has been realised has depended largely on pre-existing stratification patterns.

Stephen Ball’s qualitative contributions have been particularly influential in examining how different parents responded to the choice offered and are illustrative in this context. Choice, he argues, “[…] is predicated on a consumerist vision that is most likely to be embraced by the middle class.” (Ball 2003, cited in Walford 2003, 78) Choosing a school involves numerous far-reaching decisions on the part of the parents. Ball argues that parents’ motivation to make an informed choice is based on their interest in education and their knowledge about different possibilities. Consequently, the social and cultural capital of middle class families tend to lead to advantages for these families in the selection process. Robertson and Lauder (2001) as well as Reay and Ball (1997) strengthen this argument when they insist that choices are also based on the attempt to avoid anxiety or failure. They
argue that working class families may not choose certain schools because they feel misplaced. In other words, cream-skimming and the differential exercise of parental choice as possible reactions to the introduction of market elements in primary and secondary education have created and perpetuated new cycles of inequality rather than contained social injustice. A further tradeoff between efficiency and social inclusiveness, which we should also mention at this point, can be seen in the development of school communities. There is evidence that parental choice has undermined school engagement, despite the rhetorical focus on communities and individual agency. Since parents have obtained the option of transferring their child to another school if they were dissatisfied, their interest in the specific school and in the broader, national discourse on education has diminished. This development was reinforced as “children and their parents no longer have shared interests with other students and families and, instead, may become competitors for the available openings.” (Hursh 2005, 5)

Managerial Re-Organisation

Increasing efficiency through competition went hand in glove with a restructuring of the state and its role in education policies – which was by no means less contradictory. As discussed above, respective measures have been supposed to diminish government funding of goods and services and to reduce government intervention in their provision (Karsten 1999, 313). Quite paradoxically, as a corollary of increased competition and consumer choice, the decentralisation and dispersal of former state capacities has resulted in the multiplied engagement of “more agencies and agents as the proxies of state power” (Clarke 2004, 36).

In primary and secondary education, New Labour has reinforced the move toward privatisation of the educational sector that had been initiated by the Conservatives since the 1980s by deepening private sector involvement in the schools’ administration, as initiatives such as the “Private Finance Initiative, Education Action Zones (EAZs) and City Academies” illustrate (Gewirtz 2002, 158). The idea underlying the increased autonomy of educational institutions has been that schools know best how to manage their organisation, that they are responsible for doing so and that they are more effective in doing so (Karsten 1999, 311). Following this logic, the Thatcher and Major governments passed several Education Acts to re-organise the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) which they deemed to possess a monopoly in public education (Whitty & Power 2000, 97). City Technology Colleges (CTCs) were established in the inner cities which functioned independently from the LEA system and were supported by the private sector, while state schools obtained the choice to “opt out” and receive funding directly from the central government as grant-maintained school (GMS), if enough parents agreed (Whitty & Power 2000, 97; Hursh 2005, 9).
Management of Schools (LMS) increased budgetary discretion of schools that stayed under the LEA umbrella and rendered their administration more independent (Whitty & Power 2000, 97f.).

New Labour further reduced the importance of LEAs by having the central government fund schools directly. In this context, compliance with the central government’s exigencies has increasingly been maintained through “targeted and time-limited” approaches to school funding in what Sharon Gewirtz has called a “contract model of resource allocation” (Gewirtz 2002, 159). In this scheme, schools can obtain funds in addition to the per-capita funding by the LEAs, if they partake in specific government initiatives such as “‘specialist schools’, ‘early excellence centres’, ‘family literacy schemes’ and ‘work-related learning’ – all of which are only funded for a limited period.” (Gewirtz 2002, 159)

If devolution to lower scales of governance has facilitated the management-by-competition of the education system, it has also been a proficient means to overcome the Keynesian state’s legitimation crisis, as some authors have noted. A new epistemological emphasis on terms such as ‘personal responsibility’ or ‘community’ has reconstructed individuals as “subjects of duties having to demonstrate that they deserve their rights and entitlements,” as opposed to “subjects of rights” who are granted certain benefits qua citizenship (Bonal 2003, 167; also Robertson & Dale 2002). While individuals have arguably benefitted as consumers, then, their capacities as citizens have been reduced in the broader context of marketisation – a development that has not been passive, but that needs to be viewed as the result of conscious political decisions, taken precisely because of the stated lack of legitimation. Bonal notes:

The state attempts to depoliticise education through discursive and policy strategies that emphasise self-responsibility and self-regulation. Schools and communities are told to act as entrepreneurs that, as such, must pursue their own interest in order to be competitive and more efficient. (Bonal 2003, 168)

Institutional autonomy, community involvement and individual responsibility have hence become the regulatory analogue to the retrenchment of the (Keynesian) provider state. What might prima facie sound paradoxical is that, in this process of privatisation and marketisation, the minimal state has become a strong manager and coordinator of services, now provided in a complex re-combination of the public and private sector. The managerial stance – applying to the state as much as to educational institutions at various scales and levels – emphasises quality management and accountability mechanisms while the state, at the same time, has divested “non-core activities” (Olssen & Peters 2005, 323f.). By devolving certain responsibilities to lower scales of governance the state assumes new tasks to ‘control at a distance.’

This ambivalent move has to be understood in the light of the re-interpretation of the individual as consumer. For him or her to be able to realise the choices
offered in the education market, there has to be some kind of standardisation and evaluation of performances in order to mitigate information asymmetries. Individuals must be able to judge the quality of education before having consumed it. Both choice and responsibility have hence been relegated to the capillary ends of the societal hierarchy, urging the individual, as a rational actor, to demand transparency for an informed choice. Referring to the tax-payer/consumer distinction, John Clarke has noted:

Where the public as taxpayer legitimates the pursuit of efficiency (and economy), the public as consumer legitimates the pursuit of comparability and permanent improvement in standards of service. (Clarke 2004, 40)

For obvious reasons, the extension of governmental control in quality management creates a contradiction as it clashes with neoliberal demands for small government. Neoliberal proponents would argue against bureaucracy, and yet they “are also the most ardent advocates of higher standards and controls, which would be all the more reason for government intervention.” (Karsten 1999, 314) What the state has tended to do in order to dissolve – not resolve – this contradiction was to “pass the ball” by “using contractual strategies that position schools and communities as responsible for school performance” and by intervening only in what it has perceived as emergency situations, i.e. the risks emanating from market failures (Bonal 2003, 167f.).

Standardisation and performance testing have produced oxymoronic effects, not just on the administrative configuration of institutions, but also on the pedagogical contents transmitted through the education system. As we have seen, an increase in diversity has been implied as a positive effect of consumer choice; especially in the context of Tony Blair’s and New Labour’s emphasis on ‘difference.’ As consumers have different needs, the argument went, products offered on the education market should reflect the plurality of postmodern societies. In reality, however, there has been an inherent tension between the ideal of ‘diversity’ and the increased necessity of ‘standardised’ testing. In primary and secondary education, testing has tended to streamline curricula and to foster ‘test-driven’ learning. Quite understandably so: when a school’s funding depends on its performance – or better: the performance of its pupils – it is hardly surprising that teaching will adapt and prepare pupils for the tests. Education is then based on learning ‘facts’ (often derived from the discursively dominant majority group’s politico-cultural heritage) and on proficiency in those core subjects that are tested, rather than on broad and diverse learning objectives.

Criticising the effects of quality control on educational institutions, Karsten has noted that systems organised along the lines of total quality management – an instrument borrowed from the corporate world – tend to “stimulate uniformity, bureaucratic regulations and routine methods of work” while hampering “creative adjustments to new target groups, as well as spontaneous improvements in subject material, instructional equipment or learning situations.” (Karsten 1999, 314)
other words, evaluating the health of educational institutions and the success of their students on a quantifiable, test-driven basis has had reverse effects on the plurality of contents transmitted in the classrooms. Uniformity and standardisation in a test-centred approach to education has tended to trump pedagogical ideals such as learner-centred learning which would arguably be more suited to match the objective of reflecting societal diversity.20

In higher education, a similar trend can be observed. Students have been increasingly prone to focus more on programmes that offer promising career opportunities, a development that has also led to standardisation. Through the introduction and gradual increase of tuition fees, students are obliged to take a rational choice which will make them ready to enter the labour market and enable them to pay back their student loans – even more so in an environment of ‘structural unemployment’ and given the uncertainty of flexible employment schemes. Because students are clients of the university, they expect to be procured with what they deem necessary and rational for their professional careers. In its online section on education, The Guardian published an article that sums up this debate on the importance of employability for students’ disciplinary choice in higher education. Attempting to answer the question whether ‘a master’s will get you a job,’ Lucy Tobin argues that it is “[…] crucial to ensure you’re getting the best value for money – not necessarily the cheapest fees, but a place on the course that is most likely to lead to the job you want, at an institution with good industry links, careers advice and student satisfaction levels.” (Tobin 2011)21

These arguments show how, not only in the United Kingdom, but in most Western nations, we can witness a drifting away from the historical and etymological idea of universitas as an institution that refers to the “whole.” The emphasis on vocational aspects has created a strait jacket for students, professors, and administrators alike, narrowing and specialising educational objectives. While, in theory, the market provides diversity, as New Labour was keen on insisting, it tends to streamline education, both in primary/secondary and in higher education. In higher education, where the commodification process has been more pronounced, this tension seems to be even more tangible. Perhaps, the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia’s entry on “university” is the most insightful source in this respect because it reflects what seems to have become common knowledge. There, a university is defined as a “corporation that provides both undergraduate education and postgraduate education.” (Wikipedia 2011, our emphasis)

**CITIZENSHIP OR HUMAN CAPITAL?**

Fiscal austerity and budget cuts prompted by the mid-1970 oil shocks raised questions as to whether the Fordist compromise was still tenable and opened up debates on which culprits were to be held responsible for the concurring decline of British industry. The impact of economic restructuring was recognised as a longer-standing, structural re-alignment that British society had to adapt to if it wanted to
keep up with its international competitors. Yet, the soul-searching was also introspective and criticism was targeted to no small extent at the state’s instability and its failure to manage these changes. Referring to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies’ (CCCS) 1981 book *Unpopular Education*, Sharon Gewirtz identifies “at least three sources of social instability” that were blamed as catalysts for the crises at the time: the failure of universities to produce “bright young managers and technicians of a renovated capitalism,” a labour force which “in no way behaved as had been hoped [but rather] as dispossessed wage labourers fighting to maintain or increase their share of the value produced”, and finally, the schools that were perceived as unable to reign in “conflicts over discipline, curriculum and the handling of informal school cultures.” (CCCS 1981, 174, 174/175, 188; cited in Gewirtz 2002, 11). In other words, crises in “capital accumulation, social control and legitimation” fostered an environment generally critical of state institutions and led to a strong discourse that held these institutions responsible for Britain’s ailing competitiveness (Gewirtz 2002, 13).

Embedded in a broader discursive and political shift toward entrepreneurialism and marketisation, the introduction of competition and (consumer) choice into formerly ‘decommodified’ public services coincided with a restructuring of the state. In education, the selective dispersal of responsibilities from the state and its managerial centralisation of performance and quality control have shifted responsibilities between the public and the private. Educational institutions, communities, and the individual were re-defined so as to accommodate ‘consumer sovereignty’ and, on the flip side of the coin, were to be held responsible for their choices. In this sense, the state deferred its legitimacy deficit by relegating it to lower scales of governance.

We should not be oblivious to the fact that the emergence of neoliberalism as the hegemonic discourse in public policy debates was influenced by locally specific policy decisions and that outcomes did not necessarily correspond to the stated intentions. As Bell reminds us, and as the other chapters in this book show, individual case studies reveal the panoply of contextually determined processes of policy generation, implementation, and outcomes. As to the present chapter, the best examples for the contradictory nature of intentions and results are the schisms between, on the one hand, inclusive choice and stratification, as well as standardisation and diversity on the other. As we have seen, choice, portrayed particularly by New Labour as mitigating social injustice, has led to the unintended persistence of stratification.

Tensions at the core of this system are left unresolved. Can an orientation toward the market in a ‘post-industrial’ society where pupils and students are pitted against one another and interpellated as value-maximisers from an early age be expected to provide a fertile ground for a community spirit? Put differently: how are pupils and parents supposed to share a common identity – even if this means just within the boundaries of the school premises – if efficiency redefines them as consumers that are to actively pursue their individual needs? Moreover, while the
introduction of market elements into the education system were deemed to reflect the diverse nature of educational demands – reflecting, in other words, the different interests, learning behaviours, and talents of pupils and students – the standardisation that has been necessary to mitigate informational asymmetries has tended to streamline pedagogical contents.

One important point which transcends these contradictions remains to be made. If efficiency is the broadest common denominator of neoliberal education reform and if efficiency is understood as the central advantage of markets, a crucial question needs to be answered: Which end is efficiency supposed to serve? For efficiency, no matter if provided through the market mechanism or by the state, cannot be an end in itself. Efficient outcomes are defined as those that cannot be attained with a lower input of efforts. If the marketisation and privatisation of the educational system was legitimised as a response to the perceived inadequacies of state institutions to adapt to economic restructuring toward post-industrialism in the 1970s, as Gewirtz reminds us, the unintended outcomes of these policies seem to be ill-matched to ‘efficiently’ encounter economic restructuring in the context of a knowledge-based society.

The standardisation through testing in primary and secondary education – noticeable also in higher education – contradicts exigencies of the labour market as latest insights in labour economics and international economics show. Since technological change and international trade increasingly lead to the replacement of routine occupations, the types of skills learned for standardised tests are precisely those that are most vulnerable to offshoring and automatisation. In Alan S. Blinder’s words “[…] the nation’s school system will not build the creative, flexible, people-oriented workforce we will need in the future by drilling kids incessantly with rote preparation for standardized tests in the vain hope that they will perform as well as memory chips.” (Blinder 2006, 7) Similarly, the increase of tuition fees has been based on premises that are no longer valid. The argument in favour of shifting university funding from taxation to fees was based on an increase in the university wage premium that started in the late 1970s. The underlying notion was that graduates earned more – and would continue to earn more – relative to non-graduates. However, this premium has gradually declined since the 1990s, so that the reasons that justified the establishment and gradual increase of private funding in the first place, are based on a world view from the 1980s which no longer mirrors today’s realities.

One claim that has been made throughout this chapter about neoliberalism’s function as a hegemonic discourse certainly applies also to the creation and contestation of new strong discourses. If neoliberalism that has dominated debates in public policy for three decades emerged from the fringes and gained its momentum as a response to specific crises in the 1970s, a new assessment that takes these new realities into account will have to take a similar path.
NOTES

2 Criticising state-centred models as too parochial, Stephen Ball has underlined the discursive construction of policy practices. Rather than assuming the one-to-one implementation of state policies, Ball and colleagues suggested that different contexts shaped policies from the emergence of the text to its practical implementation and to the outcomes it creates (Bowe, Ball & Gold 1992; Ball 1994; Lall 2007). This approach allows for an analysis that includes the notions of individual agency, of historical and contextual specificity and of contestation.

3 In a “sporadic, yet wave-like or 'layered,' non-linear sequence” neoliberalisation processes have gained dominance in Anglo-American countries since the 1980s and spread around the world as the hegemonic paradigm for economic reform (Brenner et al. 2010, 4; Jessop & Sum 2006, 287). Neoliberalism’s support in international economic institutions (e.g. OECD, IMF and World Bank), its key role in advanced capitalist economies as well as its dominance in the restructuring of former socialist economies and developing countries have consolidated its hegemonic role (Jessop & Sum 2006, 287/288).

4 See also Coe et al. 2010 who argue that the externalisation and naturalisation of the economy is inextricably linked with its historical development as a scientific discipline. Emerging in the late 19th century, modern economics has borrowed metaphors from sciences such as biology and physics to underpin its truth claims as universal and natural. The ‘cycles,’ the ‘equilibrium,’ and the ‘health’ of the economy are just some of the examples that reify the economy as an organism or system that functions outside social relations.

5 The definition based on serving the public interest is different from and broader than the economic notion of pure public goods in contrast to private goods. Public goods are characterised by non-rivalry and non-excludability of consumption and, thus, non-appropriability of adequate revenues (Pelkmans 2006, 58). As a result, the price mechanism fails and their supply by markets will be insufficient – or will not even take place at all. In the case of national defense for instance, the amount consumed by one person does not diminish the quality or reduce the possible consumption available to others. Education is not a pure public good in this sense because each additional child/student raises costs (rival consumption) and people can be excluded easily (Stiglitz 2000, 136f.).

6 The notion of ‘public sector’ refers to this distinction. However, if we aim at discussing different organising principles regarding the provision and funding of public goods and services, such a definition changes with the applied organising principles, i.e. due to the increasing privatisation of public service. In the UK National Accounts for instance local authority-controlled schools are classified within the public sector whereas universities are classified within the private sector (Office for National Statistics 2008).

7 Amenta et al. subsume the most common understanding of the welfare state and social policy as “efforts of states to address economic insecurity and inequality due to risks to regular income” (Amenta et al. 2001, 213), while Gilens concedes that ‘welfare’, especially in the US context, does have “a fairly clear ‘center,’” whereas the concept behind it has “rather fuzzy ‘borders’” (Gilens 1999, 12).

8 The classic example for a negative externality is environmental pollution. The producer does not take these external costs for society into account, although they may be substantial. In the case of positive externalities, leaving the consumption choice to individuals may result in a suboptimal level for society as these individuals are assumed to base their decisions solely on their private benefits (Stiglitz 2000, 80).
9 For example, before the transaction takes place in a market for used cars the seller knows more about the product than the buyer. Consumers are less willing to pay a high price for a good of unknown quality. As a result, high-quality products will be provided less and the “lemons” in the market drive out the high quality products even though consumers would value them more (Akerlof 1970).

10 Julien Le Grand gives a lucid account of the two characteristic – if not caricature – stances on the advantages and shortcomings of government bureaucracies. He juxtaposes the perception of functionaries as altruistic “knights” from a left perspective with the perception of self-interested “knaves” held by more conservative observers. (Le Grand 2007, 209)

Moreover, they emphasise the role of order in Thatcher’s reform strategies: “‘Order’ was associated with strong political agencies at the national level and the revival of nationalist identity. Government [sic!] may have restricted its direct competence to matters of security and foreign affairs, but its policies in these affairs were assertive and even jingoistic. Strong political government also had a central role in regulating official producers of services so that they best met consumer wishes. As a result, libertarianism toward consumers was combined with authoritarianism toward ‘public’ producers.” (McLean & Voskresenskaya 1992, 77).

11 In the original, Krätke writes: “[…] das drastischste Sparpaket in der britischen Geschichte“ (Krätke 2010, 13; our translation)

12 As Elizabeth St. George, researcher at the Australian National University, argues, education was classified as a service in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the Uruguay Round in order to “ensure the gradual reduction of restrictions on educational services such as technology transfer, consultancy, [and] distance education” (St. George 2006, 591).

13 The equivalent data for non-resident students, more indicative of student mobility was 300,056 in 2004 and 341,791 in 2008 (OECD 2011).


15 Movements toward ‘marketisation’ and ‘privatisation’ have been more nuanced than these terms suggest, however. While ‘privatisation’ includes the direct transfer of services to the private sector, Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs), outsourcing and out-contracting of previously public services as well as the financing of services through fees (as opposed to taxation), the term ‘marketization’ subsumes the creation of new (adding alternative providers) or internal markets (separation of provider and purchaser, as well as of policy-maker and operator), and the creation of market-friendly conditions (Clarke 2004, 35f.; Whitty & Power 2000, 94).

16 While the parents’ discretion in budgetary negotiations and in administrative decisions increased, the national teacher unions lost its collective bargaining rights for “pay and conditions” in 1987 (McLean & Voskresenskaya 1992, 77f.).

17 For a U.S. version of this broader argument see Robert Reich’s book ‘Super Capitalism’. Secretary of labor in Bill Clinton’s first administration, Reich argues that, since the 1980s, individuals have been empowered as consumers while they were disenfranchised as citizens.

18 Re-enforcing this trend of curricular standardisation, parents have tended to send their children to schools that teach the core subjects in order to allow them to enter university education upon their graduation.

19 But, in what goes beyond the desirability of certain methods or contents transmitted in the classroom, test-driven learning has displayed an inherent leniency toward reproducing precisely those skills that are more easily automatized and/or offshored. Put differently, countering economic restructuring with this type of approach seems rather ill-matched, since the skills that are taught contradict the tendencies of the labour market. We discuss this thought in more detail in the concluding section.
This sole focus on employability is underpinned by Tobin’s choice to quote a ‘career consultant’ for her argument:

‘If you’re serious about investing your time and money in a postgraduate course, ensure you’re making an informed decision,’ advises Laura Hooke, careers consultant at City University London.

‘If you are motivated by the sheer enjoyment of study and a love of the subject, that’s great. But if you see further study as a means of getting employment, proceed with caution. A job ... is not guaranteed.’ (Tobin 2011)

While Blinder has referred to the United States the same argument holds true in the context of the United Kingdom.

In a lecture given on January 27, 2011 at Berlin’s Free University (‘The Crisis of the Higher Education System in the United States’), Robert Meister, professor at the University of California in Santa Cruz, has made a similar argument with view to the specific United States context.

REFERENCES


GREY ZONES OF THE MARKET


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INTRODUCTION

The Governance of Britain Green paper was presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, Jack Straw, in July 2007. In Chapter 4 Britain’s future: the citizen and the state, it talks about Citizenship and national identity. The paper acknowledges in the opening line that

…the concept of Citizenship is a complex one … (2007:53).

The context that is described is one of legal rights, nationality, democracy and identity; leading to British citizenship. A clearer definition of citizenship would, the Government believes, give individuals a better understanding of their British identity. The “rights and responsibilities” that go with citizenship need to be valued, not only by new arrivals but also by British young people (pt 185, 2007:54).

The paper goes on to state that young people’s engagement in society and understanding of what it means to be a “citizen” is the key to having a cohesive society. Reference is made to the achievement that the Government had made during the last decade in citizenship engagement particularly through its Education policy (2002) which introduced Citizenship studies as part of the core School Curriculum. However, concern had been raised about the fall in the number of young people taking part in formal political processes such as voting (Electoral Commission and Hansard Society Research Report, March 2007) and the Governance report states that:

This shows a lack of appreciation of the importance of the democratic process and of the need for active citizenship (pt 189, 2008:55).
This policy has been chosen for analysis because in a democracy everybody should be given the tools to participate in society and encouraged to have a voice, especially young people. The concern regarding the link between neoliberalism and citizenship is that citizens are educated in order to create individual entrepreneurs who can contribute to a knowledge economy, where education is not seen as a public good improving social needs and challenging social justice but is only about private interest and profit. Citizenship is not a new concept but there is a need to question “active citizenship” as it is promoted by Government particularly as a means of dealing with social problems, harnessing more votes or creating compliant citizens. In particular:

…the university and college educators should be the most vocal and militant in challenging the corporatization of education by making it clear that at the heart of any form of inclusive democracy is the assumption that learning should be used to expand the public good, create a culture of questioning, and promote democratic social change (Giroux, in Hill & Kumar, 2009:42).

The Government looked at ways to animate young people’s understanding of what it means to be a British citizen and to expand their participation in the political arena by launching a Youth Citizenship Commission. The focus of the Youth Citizenship Commission was to find out what support Schools needed in order to improve their preparation of young people for adult citizenship. In his review of the Curriculum (DFES, 2007), Sir Keith Ajegbo refers to

…all schools will teach…the Government wants schools…involving all schools (pt 190, 2007:56).

It is like Tony Blair’s mantra: “Education, Education, Education”.

The concern in this chapter is that government policy focussed on the delivery of Citizenship Education only through Schools. If they were serious about enabling young people’s engagement in society as “active citizens” and encouraging them to vote, then why was the audience for this education policy only through formal education, namely schools and teachers? Where was the voice of youth work and young people?

This chapter will examine whose voice has been heard and who has influenced the agenda on Citizenship but also identify any gaps and whether as Ball suggests:

Only certain influences and agendas are recognised as legitimate, only certain voices are heard at any point in time within the commonsense of policy (Ball, 1993:45).

Policy according to Taylor (1997) is more than just words; it is made up of lots of different points of view and is often based on particular ideologies or value bases. Policy is contextual in terms of the social, political and economic climate in which
it is created. Policy is created by Government officials on behalf of the state and is more often than not a compromise of differing agendas. The implementation of policy is dependent on a number of complex inter-relationships which are often rooted in an economics and efficiency agenda, rather than one that reflects values such as social justice, equality and democracy. Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), talk about individuals being:

…marginal to the policy process or they are represented…

often by elite groupings or hand picked individuals. It is often the case that the voices of young people in education policy are …for the most part strangely silent…. Where advocates for young people are present it is often in a smaller body of academic literature and here voices are heard but as …theoretically over determined mouth pieces, or even as …subverters of the status quo (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992:6).

There is a contradiction inherent in the relationship between politics and the creation of policy that politicians and policymakers rely on professionals to deliver and implement their policy initiatives. Very few professionals or practitioners get to have a say in the creation of policy, and the cumulative effect of several years of reform in the Education sector has taken its toll on those on the receiving end, both professionals and those that they work with.

This chapter will explore the perceived lack of representation of youth work through using the Policy Cycle (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992). Starting with the Context of Influence, the chapter looks at where public policy begins, key ideas are established and priorities decided. The role of youth work is considered before an examination of the Context of Practice, the arena in which policy is enacted or addressed. The next section looks at different models, a look at the Context of Outcomes, and the Context of Political Strategy (Ball, 2006). The recommendations of the Youth Citizenship Commission and the government response are reviewed, before an overview of the new Coalition Governments plans for a National Citizen Service and the implications these have for practice.

Context of Influence

The context for the resurgence of interest in citizenship and its priority as a policy issue rests on a number of issues. Research by Macgregor (1990, in Kerr et al, 2009) found that the change of emphasis from individual obligation to a collective responsibility was in part a reaction by the New Labour administration of 1997 to the outgoing Conservative government. This was seen as part of a national educational policy to promote the practice of citizenship as part of a wider regeneration of communities, which along with devolution, sought to renew the debate about national identity and Britishness. The widening of membership of the
European Union from 15 to 25 countries in 2004 and to 27 in 2007, increased pressure in terms of migration and employment. With further countries waiting to join, citizenship education was viewed as crucial as part of a coordinated response to the Global economy (Kerr et al, 2009:253).

Citizenship is regarded as important in modern and fast moving societies because of the need to be able to cope with constant political, social and economic changes which increase the pressure on relationships in society, not least those of young people. Kimberlee (2002) found that research into young people’s experience of society today was characterised by longer transitions between childhood and adulthood, the demise of traditional family and community support mechanisms, and less influence from adult role models who had previously encouraged community cohesion. The media translated this as young people displaying signs of alienation and apathy but researchers found that this was not the case rather that young people’s engagement with political culture had changed. There is a perception from those in power that there is a link between the lack of active citizenship and a decline in take up of educational opportunities, as well as an increase in crime and poor health, and that more needs to be done to balance individuals’ notion of their rights along with their responsibilities. The concern from Government was that there was a lack of involvement from young people in their communities; that young people do not behave in a morally responsible way; that young people do not understand the changes to the cultural composition of their neighbourhoods and that young people do not participate in formal politics such as voting. So the pressure was for citizenship education to have a more prominent role, not just in education but in the wider society (Crick, 2000, in Lopes et al, 2009:2).

One of the most influential thinkers and writers on citizenship has been Sir Bernard Crick. In his “Essays on Citizenship” he reflects on some fundamental issues, the history of citizenship but also the ideas behind it, its acceptance as part of the political tradition and its implementation.

Crick draws on the work of T.H. Marshall (1950 in Crick, 2000:7), when he describes citizenship as being composed of three elements: Civil, Political and Social. Civil is the right to individual freedom; Political is the right to participate in the exercise of political power, and Social is the right to welfare and security in sharing in the life of a citizen in the making. Active citizenship is achieved when all three elements interact.

Miller (2000, in Brooks, 2007:417) has posited that in contemporary British society there are three understandings of “citizenship”. The third understanding which implies a more active, even a collective type of citizenship, was the one that was taken up by the New Labour government and which underpinned a lot of social policy initiatives coming out of Whitehall. Coffey believes that citizenship has been taken up as a key role and:
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recast as an active status that carries with it the obligations of social inclusion, mutuality, participation and democracy (2004:43 in Brooks, 2007:418).

Sometimes there is a distinction made between understandings of the concept of “active citizen” made on the right or the left of the political spectrum. In a simplistic analysis those on the right are viewed as promoting active citizenship in order to free people from dependency on the welfare state and those on the left are thought to believe that citizenship is achieved through political involvement and that is best done in the context of community (Deem et al, 1995, in Brooks, 2007:418). Some claim that Labour’s longer term aim was to

…re-educate people that the state is an enabler rather than a provider of services (Landrum, 2002, in Brooks, 2007:418).

In this agenda education has a key role. Crick is clear that citizenship is an overarching activity that reflects concepts such as political literacy, political philosophy and should be part of Education but he regards it as

…more than a school educational subject (2000:110).

He regards concepts as the way in which we build a picture of the outside world and that concepts can be expressed in different ways but that it is not necessary:

…to go beyond the language of everyday life to understand and to participate in the politics of everyday life… (2000:77).

He describes political literacy as a combination of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes, developing alongside each other, each one enforcing the other two. His description of Knowledge includes who has the power and how institutions work, as well as how to be involved. Skills are about acting as an active participant or choosing not to, and being able to communicate. Attitudes are about values such as freedom, tolerance, fairness, and respect for truth and for reasoning; and are all compounds of Democracy. What Crick stresses is that there is a need for a shared understanding and acceptance of what is meant by these concepts before it is possible to secure written criteria for making reliable judgements on any related issues.

Davies (2008) also believes there are reasons why political literacy should be promoted:

Politics has to connect with young people: it must be taught and learned in ways that are congruent with the essential nature of political education… (Davies, 2008:381).

Davies does state that it is difficult for education not to be political but agrees with Harber (1991), that there needs to be a clear distinction between education, socialization and indoctrination.
Crick does not believe that the government focus on being a “good” citizen, through obeying the law, paying your taxes, knowing your place and being grateful to be governed, equates with being an “active citizen”. Nor does he view Citizenship as a form of voluntary work but emphasises that education for citizenship must include training for political activity through acting together and not just “watching” from the sidelines. Crick regards a state that does not have active citizenship as one in which individuals feel powerless to act, and which results in groups of young people being separated from society, driven to behaving in an anti-social way or displaying a complete absence of interest. He says that:

…political activity is too important to be left to politicians. Political activity by citizens is the very essence of a free society (2000:130).

Unfortunately politicians have taken charge of citizenship education and the introduction of the Citizenship order in 2000, which led to citizenship education becoming a core subject in the School Curriculum in 2002, has not reflected all of Bernard Crick’s concerns even though he was one of the main architects of the policy. It certainly has not taken account of it being more than a “school educational subject”.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK

The important role that Informal Education through Youth work can have in working with young people is evident in the characteristics that underpin informal education. These are that informal education makes space for association and deliberation; it enables self directed involvement and action; and it uses a critical perspective to encourage inclusion and participation (Packham, 2008:12). Informal education is usually carried out with young people but can also be used in community learning and active citizenship. Youth workers view the processes and principles of informal education as essential to their work; Banks gives a concise summary of the characteristics as follows;

…the process is based on dialogue, it works with cultural forms that are familiar to participants, participation is voluntary, it takes place in a variety of settings, it has educational goals…and makes use of experiential as well as assimilative patterns of learning (1999: p.7).

This does not mean that leaning is unstructured. The framework for youth and community work draws on the work of the Brazilian educator, Paolo Friere (1921-1997). It is about conversational encounters with others; reflection, critical exploration and re-creating knowledge. The youth and community worker works to create space for such interactions to happen. Packham acknowledges that youth and community workers,
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…have an important role as informal educators…to enable participants to think critically…and to identify who will benefit and how (2008:40).

This is in contrast to some formal education processes which are didactic, directed and non-experiential. In the Frierian model:

…all participants are recognized as thinking, creative people with the capacity for action… (Stewart, 2008, np, in Packham, 2008:18).

This is not to dismiss all forms of formal education because

…ultimately it is the quality of the relationship which forms out of the engagement, the degree of choice…and other participative practices of the workers… (Ord, 2008, np, in Packham, 2008:18).

However, the informal educational approach is vitally important to improve, contribute to and challenge government policy initiatives, such as the debate on citizenship, because research on the effects of neoliberalism on education has found that:

Capitalism requires increasing numbers of workers, citizens and consumers who willingly do what they are told to do and think what they are told to think. The production of such human capital is the most fundamental role schools play in a capitalist society (Martell, 2005:5, in Kumar and Hill).

Youth work by contrast seeks to be distinctive to other forms of work with young people through its explicit commitment to:

Young people’s voluntary participation; seeking to tip the balance of power in their favour… seeing and responding to young people simply as young people, as untouched as possible by pre-set labels; working on and from their territory… respecting and working through their peer networks (Davies, 2005:22 in Young, 2006:2).

CONTEXT OF PRACTICE

The Home Office pilot project, Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC), which ran between 2004 and 2006 reflects the context of the New Labour government’s desire for greater participation from communities in government processes, alongside the tension for volunteers of acting in what may have appeared to some as a process of welfare, surveillance and control. This was accompanied by a change in the perception of the role of voluntary work in communities, which previously had been viewed by some as a philanthropic activity and by others as interference. The Government’s priorities of seeing voluntary community engagement as contributing to skill development, social cohesion, improved service delivery and a step towards the achievement of full
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citizenship, culminated in the ALAC pilot programme being set up in seven areas across the UK, involving over one thousand people.

The priority was to encourage different types of citizenship involvement and the influence of youth and community workers in supporting this to happen was vital. Although it was a Home Office directed project, the ALAC programme recognised the role that informal learning could have with the name reflecting,

... the importance of action and the learning by doing process (Packham, 2008:8).

The UK government’s emphasis on active citizenship had been influenced by the idea of social capital, an idea that derived from the work of Robert Puttnam (2000), which analysed the decline of civic involvement in American communities, seen as the result of a disconnection in the relationships in communities. Adoption of this type of policy has implications for youth and community work practice, which is why it is important for the voice of the profession to be heard and listened to. The paradox is in activities which may benefit some community members but may harm others. What is important here is to question, “For whose benefit?” and to exert influence to enable real and informed choice. The focus on volunteering, particularly amongst young people (DfCSF: 2007), is more about individual capital and an individual responsibility for change, than collective action.

Young people are currently centre stage and are seen as a priority to promote “active citizenship” to. This is partly due to current moral panics about young people’s perceived lack of involvement in anything political (Lister et al, 2005). Young people’s perceived lack of engagement in the political process has been highlighted through the recorded decline in turn out of young people in the general elections in the UK in 1997, 2001 and 2005. This lack of participation has been put down to young people not achieving any financial independence by the time they are able to vote; not that young people are not interested (Hall and Williamson 1999). The response from Government has been to increase the management and control of young people, they are seen as a problem to be dealt with. By default so are the professionals that work with them, which is why youth workers are not part of the discussion on citizenship. Young people and youth workers are “objects” of policy, made in response to media panics. Young people are often seen as a homogeneous group because of age and are not regarded as individuals with individual experiences based on class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability.

A top down approach to citizenship identity which is non negotiable, is not the process through which young people gain their own sense of identity, which is usually through interacting with friends and family members and in the post modern world through sites such as Face book and My Space, encouraging contact with global youth cultures (Hall et al, 1998; Coffey, 2004). Schools are a form of social control as it is compulsory to attend (Coffey: 2004), and social citizenship is undermined by the focus on volunteering (2007:420). Brooks believes that the role
of citizenship education in schools has serious limitations because the school is acting as facilitator in the role of the state with its “potential” citizens, encouraging young people to contribute to an economic agenda (Aapola et al, 2005). Analysis of the role of teachers in developing workers of the future in texts by Rikowski (2000,2001,2007), demonstrates the fear the capitalist state has of any form of teaching that tries to educate students about the reality of their situation and to raise their awareness of this because of undermining the role of education for social control (Hill & Kumar,2009:20).

Research by Lister et al (2005) found that young people could not identify rights, but could identify responsibilities, with citizenship based on economic respectability and not on a universal status or having a “voice” (Brooks, 2007:422).This approach is not based on the principles of youth work.

A DIFFERENT MODEL

The question Annette (2008:388) asks, is should citizenship education be based on a civic republican model, emphasising individual rights or based on a liberal model which stresses moral and social responsibility? The notion suggested by New Labour was linked to the regeneration of communities and the idea of shared or common ideals rather than an individualistic response. The approach proposed is one that allows for a contemporary perspective of citizenship in British life, based on a shared understanding rather than a traditional republican political stance (Pettit, 1997).

What is proposed is a form of civic republicanism, where rights and responsibilities are reflected in active self governance and participation in a political community (Oldfield, 1990; Pettit, 1997; and Maynor, 2003, in Annette, 2008). It is an idea that is heavily promoted in the United States of America (Barber, 1984; Sandel, 1996; Galston, 2001, in Annette, 2008). Annette talks about the need to know how young people understand the “political” in relation to their own lives and those of their communities, more than the more formal aspects of politics such as voting (2008:390). He believes that now that citizenship education is established as a key part of not only formal education but other forms of learning, that new models are emerging, which need to be built upon. Such as, the use of

…active learning, learning that is by definition experiential in nature (2008:393).

This is based on the learning cycle of David Kolb (1998), using “structured learning experience with measurable outcomes”, with learning emerging from the structured reflections of the learner. This is used in training youth and community workers and in work between youth workers and young people. Giroux believes that active and critical political agents have to be formed, educated and socialised
into a world of politics (Kumar & Hill, 2009:5). This is what is missing from
government policy on citizenship education and formal education.

What is important here is the experience of developing and using skills, which is
what Crick was proposing (Hart et al, 2007, in Annette, 2008:395; Crick, 2000).
This is done on a daily basis in youth work, where young people can become
politically aware through projects that encourage their involvement with the local
community and with a wider national/international audience. Shaw and McCulloch
(2009) define citizenship as:

the practices through which subjects engage in democracy (p9).

Democracy itself can be viewed either as a set of political institutions which are
managed by the state to achieve conformity or as an ongoing process of negotiation
through which disagreement and dissent is seen as an asset to be harnessed for the
benefit of the community and individuals. This latter definition of Democracy
reflects the difficulty of competing points of view and the struggle from the
powerless to challenge the powerful.

Fyfe (2003) believes that democracy as a process must allow people to form
their own identity as well as to express it (Shaw and McCulloch, 2009:9), and
should enable them to say “no” when they need to. This is very important in work
with young people because their identities are still being formed and if policy
formulation is based on a “deficit” model rather than a “potentiality” model
(Davies, 1992) , then young people who do not feel they have the power to
challenge negative images may become disillusioned and alienated from the
political arena. In his study, “Disconnected Youth” , Barham(2004) found evidence
that young people are engaged in political issues but often ones that are single
issues, which can be reacted against in the short term, rather than proactively trying
to change things in the longer term. Young people need to be enabled to see a
broader picture and to be able to understand how power can be used to maintain
inequality. To assist them to develop skills to participate and to think critically,
“we need research into how young people understand the “political” as it relates to
their everyday concerns in their communities, to the more formal political sphere
of voting, political parties and holding public office” (Annette, 2009:390).

CONTEXT OF OUTCOMES

Policy is not just implemented it is subject to interpretation and re-creation, as well
as “interpretations of interpretations”(Rizvi and Kemmi, in Bowe et al, 1992:23)
based on practitioners experience , history, purpose and values. The idea that the
arena of change is only made up of policy makers on one side and practitioners on
the other is naive and only serves to reinforce the idea that policy comes from the
top down, implying that theory and practice are not linked and that policy is more
important than practice (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992:10). Ball (1994:51) talks about
the need to counter the effects of the Policy Cycle through the Context of Outcomes, where the relationship between changes to practice and the impact of those changes on access and participation are identified. By including youth workers and young people in the discussion about policy on citizenship education, society’s relationship with young people today could be improved. Dialogue and discussion are seen as a vital part of democratic education (Parker, Hess and Avery, 2008:506). Research has shown that young people’s participation in discussion and debate impacts on what young people learn and that there is a positive link between knowledge acquisition and political engagement:

Active involvement in decisions that affect individuals and the places with which they associate can give greater depth to citizenship (OPDM, 2005:11).

There is a need to take account of citizenship learning outside of school (McDevitt and Kioussis, 2007; Ostler and Starkey, 2003, in Lopes et al, 2009:4). In their research, Lopes et al propose that young people’s,

…experience of empowering activities …may foster efficacy (2009:9).

Discussions are also regarded as a way of supporting and validating equality, because through discussion, decisions are made and all participating should be regarded as equal in contributing to any decision (Dahl, 1998:65, in Hess and Avery, 2008:506).

Lopes et al (2009) researched two models: one that concentrates on the processes and agency through which individuals chose to join in and one that concentrates on the structures, both social and institutional that can influence participation. The first one, the Rational Actor theory (Downs, 1957, Whiteley and Seyd, 2002, in Lopes, 2009:4) looks at what people get out of participating, a cost/benefit analysis. This is looked at alongside Cognitive engagement, the impact that being politically literate can have on an interest in politics. The second model looks at where political knowledge gained through citizenship education is seen as a resource, here education and socio-economic status can contribute to understanding how to join in. This is examined alongside equity fairness models of participation (Runciman, 1966, Gurr, 1970, Muller, 1979, in Lopes, 2009:5) where individuals have a conception of how society should treat them. If people feel that they are being treated unfairly then they may be motivated to vote for a different political party, or not join in at all. The role of citizenship education here is to provide impartial information on the balance of power and relative inequality within society. The Context of Political Strategy identifies strategies which may be political or social but which seek to tackle “…inequalities and forms of injustice” (1994:51).
CONTEXT OF POLITICAL STRATEGY

Research findings from the Youth engagement summary report (2008) found that young people are interested in issues but new ways need to be found to engage them. There is a need to change the structures and institutions of Government not just change some of the procedures:

…no matter what formal structures are in place, it is how individuals approach, make sense of and use them that finally count (Skidmore and Bound, 2008, in Lopes, 2009:16).

The Youth Citizenship Commission research findings were published in June 2009 and were organised into themes:

1. Empowered Citizenship
2. Connecting with young people
3. Changing the way decision makers and institutions work.

The research found that citizenship learning needs to be embedded from a young age and citizenship education should focus more on political literacy and include practical opportunities, which echo findings by Annette (2008) and Davies (2009). It also found that young people are not engaged because they do not have enough information, do not feel empowered and do not feel that they can make a difference. The findings also state that different ways to communicate with young people need to be found as formal language and processes put them off (Participation Works partnership report, June 2009).

Research by 2CV for the Youth Citizenship Commission in 2009 found that all the ideas for citizenship engagement were based on two fundamental conditions for engaging young people: building young people’s confidence for engaging, and fostering cross-generational trust (p.11). The research supports the argument that youth workers have an essential role in working with young people who are the most difficult to engage. Workers were able to create a dialogue where most other adults had failed. However, in order to be effective, youth workers needed information, as well as practical and financial resources which were part of a longer term strategy not just one off initiatives.

The governments’ responses to the recommendations of the YCC report were published in February 2010. The Minister for Young Citizens and Youth Engagement, Dawn Butler, MP wrote in her introduction that

It is up to young people to decide how engaged they want to be as citizens, through activities such as politics, public service, volunteering and participation (2009:4).

The government in its report, “An Agenda for Engagement”, was in general agreement with the issues raised by the YCC research, promising to review its interactions with young people at a local and at a national level, and offering support for electoral registration in schools; the use of schools as polling stations.
on election day; and providing sustainable funding for the UK youth parliament. However a number of findings were ignored, for example, the finding that 82% of young Britons didn’t think politicians could represent them fairly was sidestepped with the government apportioning responsibility to the complexity of politics and its lack of appeal, not the fact that research by a Children’s society survey showed that politicians were more interested in older voters.

The Minister’s response that “… it’s time for young people to grab the initiative and be vocal” does not address the lack of joined up coordination across local and national government regarding young people’s involvement and the need for more universal representation of young people on youth councils in order to influence decision making. The cuts to local authority budgets and the lack of youth provision in some areas are also ignored, at a time when the numbers of young people unemployed is twice that of the adult population. The report is based on actions taken in England and does not represent the devolved administrations with no UK wide policy in place to measure the effect of policy decisions on young people as part of an equality impact assessment.

The issue of lowering the voting age to 16 was not supported by the majority of young people interviewed and so not endorsed in the YCC recommendations. The researchers found that the role of citizenship education and political literacy within the school curriculum needed more resources, as well as training for staff and suitable environments to deliver in.

A report by the National Federation for Educational Research, a mapping study on connecting with citizenship education, published in July 2010; states in its key recommendations that there is a gap in the range of resources available to support citizenship education in the curriculum and that the Department for Constitutional Affairs needs to raise its profile as a department with a role in promoting education, information and advice in the key areas of justice, rights and democracy. It also states that it needs to be flexible in its delivery, as there is no one model of effective delivery. The focus needs to be clear as to who the target audience is; young people, other groups in society, stakeholders, or practitioners. Finally, the authors question where the main focus should be, in schools and colleges, or whether other areas have a role to play.

A NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

The issue of a National Civic service was not raised during the year long YCC campaign and is an initiative that the Conservatives attribute to David Cameron from 2005, with the other two main parties at the time keen to support such a programme, as part of an induction for young people into the responsibilities of citizenship.

At his first press conference for the 2010 General Election campaign, David Cameron announced that the Conservative party had developed plans for a National Citizen Service for all 16 year olds. It was described as a scheme that
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would help young people in the transition to adulthood, promoting social mixing and community engagement. It would be delivered by social enterprises, independent charities and businesses. David Cameron said: “This is about sowing the seeds of the Big Society, and seeing them thrive in the years to come” (Conservatives.Com April 2010). In other coverage of his speech, Cameron describes the proposal for a voluntary “citizen service” programme, as a “21st century version of “National Service”, although non-military. However it would not be a compulsory scheme, but would be universal, bringing together youngsters from all backgrounds” – “north or south, rich or poor, black or white” (www.bbc.co.uk).

The National Citizens Service was piloted in 12 sites in the summer of 2011 and involved up to 11,000 young people aged 16 undertaking a 7-8 week programme of voluntary work in different communities. The idea is to make this available to all 16 year olds in the UK; although the Commons Education Select committee feels that the money would be better being diverted to existing youth service provision (Guardian Politics). The aim of the service is to create young social entrepreneurs who can set up and run projects in the community (www.actionforchildren.co.uk/policy).

Speaking at the Conservative party conference in Birmingham in October last year, for the first time as Prime Minister, Cameron said:

Citizenship isn’t a transaction in which you put your taxes in and get your services out. It is a relationship – you’re part of something bigger than you, and it matters what you think, and feel and do (The Telegraph, October 6th 2010).

However the scheme has a number of flaws. It is unequal in its involvement of young people, being aimed primarily at those not in education, employment or training (NEET), and tied to welfare benefits. Its focus on payment sees citizenship needing to be rewarded with financial incentives which goes against the philanthropic idea of volunteering. A resource currently dedicated to a variety of youth programmes and to the delivery of citizenship education in schools is likely to be diverted, with it being compulsory for some and not others. Following the general election in May 2010 citizenship education is under threat because the view of the new Minister for Education, Michael Gove, is that it is “state sponsored political indoctrination”.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government are sending a set of very mixed messages here: a programme which is voluntary not compulsory; universal but considered a failure if not all young people participate; and what Crick (2000) did not advocate, citizenship as a form of voluntary work. There is a clear
commitment to diversity but the programme is only being piloted in England, not in other parts of the devolved UK administration, ignoring an equality impact assessment. It aims to encourage aspiration and offer responsibility to young people but is also about saving money by cutting crime and anti-social behaviour. The coalition government is in danger of focusing on an economic agenda which appears to be punitive and about conformity rather than about fostering efficacy. Youth work is about social education not social control, it is about informed choice. What I would argue is that we should reflect:

practice based not on the need to address current social problems and political priorities but on a commitment to developing the truly life long goals of rational judgement and authentic human experience (Young, 1999:122).

Young people have very few opportunities for expressing themselves or of contributing their perception of what citizenship is to them. Without the opportunity to express their view of the world in a way that is listened to, then they may turn to destructive or harmful behaviour. There is a need to harness what John Dewey (1958) called “impulsions”, a kind of creative energy derived from their experience of the world. If we are serious as a society about being inclusive then we need to work where those with the least power congregate, which may be on the streets with gangs, or in isolated communities: “What is disastrous for young people and for democracy is when the potential rebels are turned into real hooligans” (Shaw and McCulloch, 2009:13).

CONCLUSION

Kerr, Smith and Twine (2009:260) believe that the successful development of citizenship education has some way to go but that work needs to be undertaken in the areas of theory, policy, research and practice. First there needs to be agreement about what citizenship education is and what it is for, so that a working definition can become policy. For policy to be effective, it needs to be coherent and determined as an overall educational policy for the UK, not something that is decided ad hoc and at a local level. In order to translate policy into practice it needs to include all the key players, this means beyond formal education and outside of schools. Training and resources need to be available to make citizenship education a central feature not just an “add on” or option. There is a role for Youth work in ongoing research, not only evaluating existing programmes of participation but looking beyond schools and teachers, to evaluate and compare new ways of working. The Youth Citizenship Commissions findings suggested that to create a strong society investment was needed in youth citizenship (YCC, 2009: pt 197).

Davies (2008) research talked about the idea of “interrupted democracy”, where practices that promote or create injustice are challenged. Young people need access
to public space, as well as the opportunity to protest and to speak freely. As a society we should be providing a quality education that develops the knowledge and skills young people need to become autonomous citizens who are disposed to challenge (Giroux, 2011).

Young people are not encouraged within formal education to challenge the system or its rules. If this is not done here then it will not be done in other arenas. If individuals feel that their actions have an impact, however small then they become engaged and are more likely to connect with others, creating a shared sense of identity and belonging. This can lead to reflecting and acting on more possibilities for effecting change. An example of this is the Arab Spring, with teenagers on the streets in cities in the Middle East challenging governments and demanding change. Neoliberal policies put profit above democracy and pitch individual against individual rather than working towards the collective good. The idea of the “Big society” is not a new one, the recent report on “Children and the Big Society” states that youth groups can provide opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities but that building social capital in this way requires innovation, trust and a long term professional input (Action for Children, 2011).

Youth workers are most effective in practice when they are providing role models for young people, when they are encouraging creative interpretations of policy, and when they are acting collectively and making their challenges public. Youth workers need to continue using their distinctive informal educational approach to assist young people to develop the knowledge and skills to become active citizens and governments need to take account of this in their policy creation and implementation or face the consequences of a disenfranchised alienated generation of young people and adults.
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