Investigating school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities

2015

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Abstract

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Investigating school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux

This dissertation reports on a qualitative study of school leadership with nine secondary-school headteachers (of maintained schools) or principals (of academy-type schools) in England. The project maps schooling provision and offers an empirical account of leaders’ identities and practices in neoliberal and neoconservative times. Informed by a critical policy-scholarship methodology, documentary data from primary and secondary sources supplement narrative and semi-structured interviews conducted over 18 months. The findings are reported in five journal articles and one book chapter.

The first output maps school types through different lenses: legal status; curriculum; selection; types of academy; and school groupings. The mapping highlights the intersections between the reform agenda and historical diversity. I conceptualise the landscape holistically through locus of legitimacy and branding, arguing that diversification policies facilitate corporatised and religious interests.

Second, I show how UTCs and studio schools construct children’s abilities as fixed and differentiable in terms of predicted economic value. They select, but the responsibility for this, following Bourdieu, is transferred discursively from the school through branding and habitus to the “consumers” where it is to be misrecognised as exercising ‘school choice’.

Third, I typologise three effects on heads’ and principals’ agency and identities of a few elite multi-academy trust principals, or courtiers, who have won regional empires through expanding their academy chains to occupy the spaces opened up by the dismantling of LAs. Public-sector and school-leader identities and histories permit the promotion of their activities as “school led” and downplays their close relationship with central-state policy-makers and private-sector networks.

Fourth, I argue that corporatised leadership in schools in England is being promoted through new actors and new types of school. Corporatised leadership is characterised inter alia by the promotion of business interests and the adoption of business-derived leadership practices and identities. I use Bourdieu’s concept of field to explain the impact of business on educational leadership and the dissonance between leaders and led.

Fifth, I argue with Gunter that school leaders are removing those who embody or vocalise alternative conceptualisations of educator by eradicating ‘inadequate’ teaching, and implementing the leader’s ‘vision’. We deploy Arendtian thinking to show how current models of school leadership enable totalitarian practices to become ordinary.

Sixth, I develop Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis through narratives from two heads to argue that rather than simply being an effect of change, hysteresis may be an actively sought outcome whereby the state intervenes to deprivilege welfarist headteachers and privilege corporatised principals through structurally facilitating their habitus and mandating its dispositions for the field.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate how the diversification of provision in England and the demands of a performative, marketised regime have ontological and professional stakes for school leaders and for the led. Symbolic and economic capital is accruing to the capitalised, facilitated by corporate practices and corporate structural solutions through acquisitions and alliances. Resistance is possible, but a dissident habitus limits standing in the field. This hierarchisation is reflected in the relationship between school types and in how children are meant to self-select into that provision. This is a landscape constituted of positions, where pupils are expected to know their place and the purpose of education is to facilitate social segregation for economic efficiency.
Declaration of Original Contribution

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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### Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Baker Dearing (Educational) Trust</td>
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<td>BELMAS</td>
<td>British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSF</td>
<td>Building Schools for the Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>City Technology College</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTA</td>
<td>City College for the Technology of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCSF</td>
<td>Department for Children, Schools and Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL</td>
<td>English as an Additional Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>Education Reform Act 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>Governing Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM(S)</td>
<td>Grant-Maintained (Status)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>Local Management of Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAT</td>
<td>Multi-Academy Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEET</td>
<td>Not in Employment, Education or Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLE</td>
<td>National Leader of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>Ofsted</td>
<td>Ofsted for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills</td>
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<td>PFI</td>
<td>Private Finance Initiative</td>
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<td>PRU</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit</td>
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<td>SATs</td>
<td>Standard Attainment Tests</td>
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<td>SLE</td>
<td>Subject Leader of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SST</td>
<td>Studio Schools Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths</td>
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<td>TUPE</td>
<td>The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations</td>
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<td>UTC</td>
<td>University Technical College</td>
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<td>VA</td>
<td>Voluntary Aided</td>
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<td>VC</td>
<td>Voluntary Controlled</td>
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I want first to thank Professor Helen Gunter for the remarkable quality of her supervision and guidance throughout this project. She has always known exactly when and how to support, critique, care, challenge and advocate, and I am profoundly grateful to her for all that she has done and continues to do.

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I thank also those colleagues who have contributed to the development of the ideas presented here, including through contributions or questions at conference or seminar presentations or through anonymous peer review. Particular mention in this regard go to Julian Williams, Colin Mills, Dave Hall, Su Corcoran, Miri Firth, Stephen Rogers, Rob Higham, Andrew Wilkins, Howard Stevenson, Geoffrey Walford, Mike Apple, Catherine Needham and Tim Simkins.

Finally and most importantly, I want to thank my husband, Duncan Watts. He overcame his surprise at my wanting so much to do a PhD rather than return to doing a proper job — I had, apparently, never mentioned this ambition — to become an incredible source of support. He is deeply valorised.
Chapter one: Introducing the study

1.1. Introduction

This thesis reports on a research project which aims to illuminate understanding of the contemporary neoliberal and neoconservative policy and discursive landscape in education through mapping education provision in England and exploring the leadership of discursively significant school types within it. Documentary and interview data were generated between 2012 and 2014; the former to produce a series of typologies, presented in chapter four, which in turn were the basis for the sampling strategy for the latter. Here, nine headteachers and principals of a range of school types were interviewed three times over 18 months (the term “principal” commonly being employed in the professional field to refer to such post-holders in academy-type schools in order to differentiate them, their practices and cultures from the maintained sector). I have used both narrative and semi-structured interviewing approaches to explore their practices, identities, and through supplementary documentary data, how these speak to questions of power, agency and structure. A policy-scholarship methodology which aims to locate the phenomena under investigation in their historical and socio-ideological context has informed the research design and enabled a critical approach whereby the inequitable products of contemporary policy are exposed and problematised (Grace, 1995; Ozga and Gewirtz, 1994). The following research questions structure this study:

1. In what ways, why and with what effects has state-funded schooling provision become so recently structurally and competitively diverse and dynamic?

2. How is school leadership in this newly diverse terrain conceptualised and articulated through policy and by headteachers and principals, and with what effects?

3. How is the relationship conceptualised and articulated between school type and school leadership, and with what effects?

The use of theory, in particular Bourdieuan thinking tools, is an integral element of this study, from the way in which I have understood and framed the
problems” revealed through the research to the way I have explained the inequitable effects of policy on subjects and subjectivities through the interpretation and explanation of the data to illuminate understanding of school-type diversification and its leadership. As Dey (1993) argues:

To interpret is to make action meaningful to others, not just or even necessarily within the terms used by the actors themselves. To explain is to account for action, not just or necessarily through reference to the actors’ intentions. It requires the development of conceptual tools through which to apprehend the significance of social action and how actions interrelate. (Dey, 1993: 40)

I have responded to Dey’s (1993) call through using and developing the tools provided by Bourdieu to conceptualise, interpret and explain my data and also to frame the study. It has been useful to conceptualise educational leadership as a Bourdieuan field, which operates as a game whose rules are ‘internal and self-referencing’ (Thomson, 2005: 746). They are, moreover, axiomatic to players of the game; rules, game and the consequences of playing are occluded, understood as the way things are, or doxa, which ‘provides a teleological rationale through which failure is able to be attributed to poor playing, rather than the nature of the game itself’ (Thomson, 2005: 746). Doxa operates through misrecognition, whereby ‘doxic narratives deliberately obfuscate how the game (re)produces social inequality through the (re)production of the hierarchy of positions and capitals’ (p. 746). Employing this conceptual framework has enabled me to position the emic concerns and motivations of headteachers and principals within wider discourses and to theorise them from a critical perspective.

### 1.2. Rationale for the study

In this section, I set out why this research is timely and necessary; how it addresses knowledge gaps in the field and consequently what contributions I make through it; and finally how my own biography and axiology speak to the rationale for the policy-scholarship methodology adopted for this project.

Scholarship in the field of structural reform has not kept pace with the range of school types which has been newly developed, either in terms of investigating new types such as University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and studio schools, or in terms of critically conceptualising and mapping the contemporary field of provision in its entirety. What has been documented and explained is the way
school provision in England has been fragmented and de-systematised through successive administrations’ policies over thirty years to introduce a quasi-market into education (e.g. Ball, 2007, 2008b, 2012b; Bartlett, 1993; Gunter, 2011; Jones, 2003; Lupton, 2011; Whitty, 2008). Through this, actors from business and faith institutions and other bodies are empowered to open or expand schools. Those types appearing from 1986 to 2010 have been the focus of considerable scholarly attention, e.g. Grant-Maintained (GM) schools (Fitz et al., 1993), sponsored GM schools (Walford, 2000), the City Colleges programme (Edwards et al., 1992; Walford, 2014; West and Bailey, 2013), the specialist schools programme (Bell and West, 2003; Exley, 2009; Gorard and Taylor, 2001; Levačić and Jenkins, 2006) and the academies programme (e.g. Bourn, 2007; Curtis et al., 2008; Gunter, 2011; Woods et al., 2007). Whilst this diversification has been happening since 1986, the Conservative-led Coalition in 2010 enabled a rapid increase in the number of new types of school through expanding the category of the academy and engaging in the forced conversion of “under-performing” schools (Academies Commission, 2013; Coldron et al., 2014; Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Gunter, 2011). This academy type is the legal and discursive template for most of what has followed, with a range of regulatory freedoms and importantly, no link through governance or funding to local authorities, whose dismantling constitutes a primary objective of these diversification policies (Hatcher, 2014). Academies’ freedoms concerning, for instance, the curriculum, permit a considerable degree of intra-type differentiation. What has happened beyond this is the creation of sub-groups or brands of academy which are sufficiently strong to have become understood as school types. That form which has received the most attention is the free school (e.g. Hatcher, 2011; Higham, 2014a,b). However, new forms of academy are appearing which have not been sufficiently scrutinised in the literature. These include University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and studio schools. These represent a policy agenda whereby neoliberal and neoconservative imperatives are more or less simultaneously enacted, sometimes in harmony and often in tension (Apple, 2011). Market ideology produces school-type multiplication; differentiation being a product of the neoliberal logic whereby the distinctive is marketable, and so children become consumers in markets rather than learners, with ontological consequences which I explore in this thesis. However, neoconservatism is apparent in the landscape too, through which canonical knowledge is defined and enforced through performance measures and/or the privileging of STEM subjects, and so a simultaneous tendency to
structural homogenisation, or clustering, exists which produces losers in the field of provision. UTCs, for instance, occupy an uncomfortable place in the struggle between these competing ideologies: they risk being too academic to attract the technically (i.e. vocationally) inclined, but too vocational to attract the “able”. I suggest that school-type diversification is an intriguing site where these struggles are playing out, and consequently is an useful lens through which to explore the ideological narratives to which these struggles speak.

There is a strong concomitant policy drive towards a school-led system, whereby key functions concerning, for instance, school improvement and teacher/leader development previously held by LAs or universities are moved instead to schools operating in hubs constituted as teaching schools and/or as multi-academy trusts (MATs). Peer-reviewed journal articles are starting to address teaching schools (e.g. Husbands, 2014; Keddie, 2014). Whilst locating this phenomenon within discourses of marketisation and performativity, such outputs tend to draw largely on school-improvement literature in order to ask questions about implementation, constraints and possibilities. Literature addressing multi-academy trusts is also rare beyond that which conceptualises the category as sponsored academies (e.g. Gibson, 2015; Gunter, 2011; West and Bailey, 2013; Woods and Simkins, 2014; Woods et al., 2007). Such work has provided timely and urgent evidence of how academisation functions as privatisation, although this is less strong thematically in much of the school-improvement literature. For example, Chapman (2013, 2015) is one of the few researchers to address MATs in their broader sense of school-led groupings as well as quasi-private sector actors or institutions sponsoring academies singly or in chains. Chapman (2013) sees little substantive difference between a MAT and a federation, despite there being no structural possibility of a maintained federation and its assets being acquired through take-over by the private-sector, which is certainly possible with academies. What matters in such research is whether such collaborations work in the terms set out under the standards agenda. So what is missing from this emerging literature on MATs is a simultaneous acknowledgement of the place of school-led groupings within the category and also an exploration of how these groupings too support and reinforce themes of privatisation and corporatisation.

In this context, the present research fits within and makes contributions to this literature on structural reform in the following ways. First, it addresses an urgent requirement to critically examine and map the whole landscape of provision in
England. No such mapping currently exists, and the increasing structural diversification which has prompted this study means that such work is necessary in order to anchor and locate the body of studies of individual types such as those adumbrated above. Second, it contributes to this latter body through exploring new types such as UTCs and studio schools in detail, bringing to bear a critical perspective in addressing how power operates in and through these types, especially in the way that pupils are to be sorted into this hierarchised provision and the way that its leadership is also hierarchised and corporatised. Finally, this research contributes an empirically informed conceptualisation of school-led MATs which shows how they and their leadership are an integral part of the privatisation of education which has already been explored in relation to non-school sponsors of academies.

This leads me to the second area of the rationale for this research project, which concerns headteachers’ and principals’ sense of who they are and what they do in this landscape. Below, I show how this research responds to a requirement for a conceptualisation of school leadership at a time of intense neoliberal and neoconservative reform, as well as an empirically informed account of who these headteachers and principals are.

Headteachers were steered through a number of mechanisms during New Labour’s governments (1997–2010) to be “believers” in the cause of education reform, materially enabled and culturally disposed to ensure that these mandated reforms were delivered locally (Gunter, 2012). The Coalition government (2010–2015), too, promoted leadership as a means to enact its flagship education reform policy — academisation — but did so through differentiation, where the administration’s numerical success was achieved in part through discursively subordinating the leadership of maintained schools to academy-type schools (Gove, 2011, 2012, 2013a). So, the new types described above, including sponsored academies, are discursively collocated through policy texts and ministers’ announcements with innovative, entrepreneurial and ambitious leadership. Studies have started to explore this hierarchisation (e.g. Coldron et al., 2014), but do not take account of the full range of school types. The newest types of school, the UTCs and studio schools, are conceived to be distinctive and focused on technical education applied through business or industry partnerships; however, it is unknown to what extent these characteristics feature in how the principals of such schools understand their roles and purposes. This research...
seeks to address these gaps in the literature by exploring who those in charge of these new school types are; how they are positioned and position themselves within a hierarchy of provision; and what it means for their sense of self, their values and what they do in school when what it means to lead changes owing to waves of ideologically inspired education reform — these experienced differently, according to school type and context. Gewirtz (2002) has provided a foundational analysis of this shift in identifying and juxtaposing welfarism and new managerialism: what is presently required is a new conceptualisation of this speedy change in field conditions which incorporates the system-leading, industry-facilitated, highly differentiated corporatism* which I argue has developed from and superseded new managerialism as the normative way of understanding leadership.

My aim of interrogating the political and ideological context of these phenomena leads me to adopt a policy-scholarship approach to what might otherwise be a study of headteachers’ and principals’ subjectivities. Policy scholarship has been contrasted by Grace (1995) with policy science research, which comprises much of what is done in educational leadership and where, drawing on the natural science model, educational phenomena are considered without reference to these wider structural relations of power and cultural conditions which contribute to their production. In privileging effectiveness and implementation, policy scientists contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of subordinating power discourses, as Eacott (2011) argues cogently in his critique of leadership preparation in Australia. Common conceptual ground exists between policy science and what has been identified as functionalist research (Gunter et al., 2013; Hall and Raffo, 2009; Raffo and Gunter, 2008), whose practitioners show a ‘reverence’ (Gunter et al., 2013: 568) for the leadership whose exercise serves a managerialist reform agenda. The present research proposes an alternative, critical view to that offered by this field. This thesis is intended to make

* Throughout this thesis, I follow Spring (2012) in using the word corporatism to mean being or becoming corporatised, where corporatised signifies and/or relates to the private sector. For example, ‘Corporatism continues to dominate American schools as they are enlisted in producing compliant workers for the global economy’ (Spring, 2012: 25). This is distinct from its usage in the political sciences literatures.
contributions that are theoretical — through the deployment of a range of predominantly Bourdieuian thinking tools to a newly created set of field conditions; conceptual — through developing, inter alia, the notion of the corporatised school leader; empirical — through detailing empirically the foundation and consequences of that construction; methodological — through mapping the terrain and locating the accounts of professionals within it; critical — through revealing the inequitable power relations structured through these arrangements; and timely — through expediting the publication of the findings through the thesis’ alternative format.

Some of the reasons for my choice of subject matter and critical approach are perhaps found in my biography, elements of which I sketch out here in the interests not just of promoting understanding of the project and my rationale for studying it, but more importantly in those of enhancing its quality as qualitative research (O’Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015), where researcher reflexivity is necessary, if perhaps problematic (Troyna, 1994). First, the substantive area of school-type diversification interests me because I spent the first half of my career as a teacher, middle and senior leader in co-educational secondary community comprehensive schools in London and have lived through this emerging phenomenon. The school I joined as a newly qualified teacher in 1999 had a technology specialism which made no difference to practice or culture there. It would have been strange if it had: the school was comprehensive in structure and spirit and aimed at achieving what is constructed as a broad and balanced curriculum; as Apple (2004b) would recognise, both these qualities are open to contestation and appropriation. When I became an Assistant Head in another school in 2007, however, its performing-arts specialism permeated throughout: staff development, for example, often focused on ways to employ creative strategies across the curriculum. This, then, was a policy which here had been not just enacted, but incorporated into the soul of the school. Meanwhile, during my three years there, academies turned from being a fringe to a pressing and immediate concern with ontological and axiological stakes for the school and its communities. My move in 2010 to Manchester to do first a Master’s degree and then a PhD coincided with the Cambrian explosion of new school types following the 2010 election, and so I have been part of a critical scholarly community which has recorded, theorised and engaged in scholarly activism concerning structural reform and its consequences for people and for notions of public education.
This speaks to the second element where my biography intersects with this research — axiology. Why was I drawn to a critical approach? Here, I stand by and draw on one of the key findings in my 2011 Master’s work, which was published later (Courtney, 2014b). There, again following one aspect of my own biography, I explored the relationship between formative heteronormativity and the leadership of lesbian, gay and bisexual school leaders. What came through strongly was how once one has lived through the stigmatisation which operationalises discourses of power, one may remain alert to these discourses in a generalised way. I, along with my research participants then, had come up against the hard edges of relations of structural inequality and it had changed how I saw the world. I bring that perspective to this, and probably all my research.

1.3. Construction and structure of the thesis

It is a requirement for this alternative-format thesis that I account for the selection of this format and the manner of its construction, including the contribution of any co-authors (University of Manchester, 2014). The response to the first of these elements is this: structural reform is progressing extremely quickly; the field conditions on which analyses are predicated may rapidly become out of date and so there is a pressing need to publish the material arising from this study as soon as possible. The second element regarding its manner of construction is addressed in detail in chapter three insofar as the identification of chapter foci as products of the data and my research methodology is concerned, but I do want in this section to address more clearly the relationship between these foci and the intended site of publication, where there may be specific requirements concerning focus, content and literatures referenced, and/or a conversation taking place to which the article here is contributing. I need also to set out what Helen Gunter’s contribution was in writing chapter eight. I shall address these questions below. So, I shall now describe how the thesis is structured and, where appropriate, explain how the chapter came about and the issues raised by that, and also how Professor Gunter contributed to chapter eight. The rationale for the ordering of the chapters is provided in chapter three, section five.
In chapter two, I contextualise the study by engaging with the key literatures and themes to be explored subsequently. Since the chapters are written for publication, each is well grounded in the relevant literature. Chapter two, then, aims to minimise (but cannot wholly eliminate) repetition in this regard. I begin with a discussion of the wider ideological influences through which the policies and meanings explored here may be understood. These comprise welfarism, neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Next, I describe the diversity which has existed in the English education system since its inception to enable a more contextualised understanding of recent diversification, which I argue is a distinct phenomenon nonetheless facilitated by the particularly English history of variously enabling or tolerating a plethora of providers. Diversification policies are then exemplified through a brief summary of some key instantiations, e.g. City Colleges, academies and studio schools. Finally in this section, I discuss the role of school leadership within this landscape, which has been to implement the government’s reform agenda (Gunter, 2012), drawing on managerialism as a disciplinary technology.

Chapter three sets out the research design for the project, arguing the necessity of a critical policy-scholarship methodology given who I am as a researcher, what I value and how I intend to bring to bear history, politics and ideology to my analyses of school-type diversification and their relationship with leaders and leading. This sketch of my epistemological assumptions and how I position myself within the research underpins all aspects of the project, from the selection of methods of data generation to the way I engage with documents. I address the specific criteria for trustworthiness I have used here to ensure quality, and finally the ethical questions it raises as critical research.

In chapter four, I draw on primary and secondary documentary data to map schooling provision in England, capturing the terrain from five perspectives: legal status; curriculum; pupil selection; types of academy; and school groupings. The mapping reveals how a neoliberal/conservative reform agenda has built on historical systemic diversity to produce over 70 school types. I argue that established school types are not buried under sedimentary layers of reform, but, through faulting and folding, are thrust into the present where they are discursively re-fashioned through later ideologies. Finally, I conceptualise the entire landscape of provision through the lenses of locus of legitimacy and branding, where I argue that structural diversification policies enable non-
educational interests through transferring responsibility for education and related assets away from public and towards corporatised or religious actors and institutions.

Chapter four was conceived, structured and written the way it was to answer research question one, which focuses on describing and explaining contemporary provision. There was no attempt to write it to appeal to a specific journal, since it had to perform a task in the context of this thesis unlike most of the other papers, where there is more flexibility over matters of content and structure.

In chapter five, I explore the overall structure of education provision in England and the way that pupils are arranged into it. I do this through focusing on the place of UTCs and studio schools, arguing that provision is not only differentiated but hierarchised, and that policy and discourse normalise self-selection, whereby children, seen as possessing fixed, knowable abilities, should find a match with the most appropriate provision. I draw on Bourdieu to argue that the mechanism for this is habitus, and that this process is consequently classed, serving to reproduce societal inequalities. This chapter was conceived to continue the structural focus of chapter four and develop it to incorporate discourses relating to this theme of hierarchisation revealed through headteachers’ accounts.

In chapter six, I shift the focus from how headteachers and principals contribute to systemic hierarchisation to how they are positioned and position themselves within that hierarchy. I argue that a few elite school leaders are building empires through their leadership of multi-academy trusts and teaching-school alliances. What makes them elite is not the statuses they have acquired — these are shared by some of my participants and are necessary but insufficient. It is rather their high social capital earned and reinforced through networks comprising policy-makers, ministers and key media players. I argue that their practices and expansionism may be understood through a neoliberal lens, where acquisitions and mergers are normalised. These have profound consequences for the agency and identity of other leaders in their empire, who are subjected to symbolic violence in obtaining and maintaining these arrangements.

This chapter will be published in a forthcoming edited collection by Gunter, Hall and Apple, titled ‘Corporate Elites and the Reform of Public Education’. I was asked to contribute just as I had finished my third round of interviewing, and so the take-over by Eckersley Trust of the UTC led by Will, and Bridget’s story
concerning her failed bid were both fresh in my mind and urgent in how they spoke to the research questions and the field. So, the focus of the edited collection corresponded to a story which I felt strongly I needed to tell.

In chapter seven, I examine corporatised school leadership as a newly intensive normative discourse, arguing that it is evident in all types of school, but that it is facilitated by the structural and cultural features of new types, especially where business partners are central to the school’s mission and practices. I show how this has implications for headteachers’ and principals’ identities, contributing to a marked dissonance between these and the led, and also for the way in which leadership knowledge is commodified through, for example, consultancy structures. New corporate actors as sponsor-governors are particularly influential in new school types with inexperienced heads or principals. I argue that the increasing impact of corporatism on school leadership may be explained using Bourdieu’s concept of fields and related cross-field theory.

This chapter is the second to be published as an article after chapter eight. It responded to a call in a special issue of *Journal of Educational Administration and History* concerning ‘Consultants, brokers, experts’: knowledge actors and knowledge exchange/flow in educational administration. I had identified a strong theme of corporatism in the data, with sub-themes concerning leadership as consultancy and the role and importance of corporate actors/sponsors within and to governing bodies in providing a conduit for corporate discourse, cultures and practices. In that way, the focus of the special issue influenced the way I shaped the final writing, but all the elements already existed in inchoate form.

In chapter eight, Helen Gunter and I develop the theme of corporatised leadership by exploring in detail one aspect — the leader as absolute ruler — and the consequences of that. We draw on Arendtian tools to argue that totalitarian practices are being misrecognised as leadership in order to do the ideological work of the state, especially in new types of school. This is operationalised through vision work, where the reform agenda is internalised by headteachers and principals and its enactment misrecognised as their unique, contextual vision. This vision is held by them alone, and distinguishes them from the led, who are monitored, mandated to enact the vision and, where deemed inadequate to the task of raising attainment, disposed of.
This chapter derives solely from my research design, doctoral data, and my analysis of vision and vision work. This analysis was inspired by these data, which were replete with references to getting rid of teachers. Helen Gunter and I had agreed to co-author this initially as a conference paper, and, knowing her work (Gunter, 2014), I felt that the data were calling for an Arendtian analysis juxtaposing contemporary leadership practices and totalitarianism. Helen Gunter wrote those passages concerning this conceptual framework and I took up these tools later in the conclusion. Whilst I have used the Arendtian framework established by Helen Gunter throughout the analysis in that chapter, for the sake of clarity and simplicity I shall focus my conceptual claims and the theoretical contributions to knowledge of this thesis solely on my use of and contributions to the development of Bourdieuian theoretical tools.

In chapter nine, I conclude the discussion chapters by moving the focus from broad sets of corporatised practices to how leaders’ biographies and identities inter-relate with these. I draw on and develop Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis to explain and theorise the way in which the hierarchisation of leadership as well as school types has been a policy goal of the state, a strategy of symbolic violence where the dispositions of the capitalised are made to align through state interventions with new conditions in the field. Concomitantly, headteachers evincing welfarist dispositions through their habitus find these de-privileged, although they may through hysteresis find strength in this dissident habitus.

This chapter was conceived in such a way that it responds to and builds on the findings of an article by Coldron and his colleagues (2014). This employed the Bourdieuian concept of habitus to explain positioning amongst headteachers in a diversified landscape of provision. I saw that hysteresis offered a way to contribute to the conversation they started using the same overarching framework but offering a distinctive perspective on how headteachers and principals position themselves and are positioned within a hierarchy of provision.

In chapter ten, I state the findings of the research project both holistically and arising from the individual outputs before addressing explicitly and discretely the research questions structuring this study. Finally in that chapter, I set out the contributions to the field I make through this thesis and indicate some directions for future scholarship and research prompted by the present study.
Chapter two: School-type diversification and its political, conceptual and ideological context

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship between ideas, policies and structures in order to contextualise the present study. Here, then, I first map the ideological and political terrain within which this phenomenon of school-type diversification is located. I do this by defining and explaining the three important overarching concepts — welfarism, neoliberalism and neoconservatism — which have contributed to a set of policies whose expression is the contemporary landscape of provision. Next, I move from meta-narratives to a discussion of these policies, explaining through a brief description of ideologically illuminative exemplar initiatives how school-type diversification and school restructuring have come to be central elements of successive administrations’ attempts to “modernise” education. Finally, I describe the role of school leadership in contributing to achieving the market-driven policy goals of this reform agenda through influencing leaders’ professional practice and identities.

2.2. The ideological context

School-type diversification in England may be understood through the ideological shift from a series of post-war settlements constructing what Gewirtz (2002) and Clarke and Newman (1997), inter alia, identify as welfarism to a complex interplay of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. These latter elements have been encroaching upon the education field (Bourdieu, 2000) over the last thirty years, both in England and internationally (Apple, 2011, 2013; Troyna, 1994). What has resulted from these ideological shifts and co-locations are ‘promiscuous entanglements of global and local logics [which] crystallize different conditions of possibility’ (Ong, 2007: 5). The instantiation of this ideological ‘assemblage’ (Ong, 2007: 3) in England is replete with tension, manifested in school structures and headteachers’ accounts, between welfarism and its focus on the integration of common provision, and neoliberalism/neoconservatism and their focus on differentiating and marketising provision whilst privileging certain knowledges.
2.2.1. Welfarism

A vital component of this ideological assemblage in western-style democracies, and particularly England, is welfarism. Welfarism was born of ‘[n]otions of national citizenship and a common people’ (Newman, 2007: 33) and invoked ‘commitments … to community, collegiality, social justice and the public good’ (Grace, 1995: 21). National ‘social reconstruction’ was sought, with ‘plans for greater democracy and social justice, the modernization of the economy … the greater development of high quality public services for all citizens and a more participative and consultative public culture’ (p. 30). The primary mechanism for achieving these reconstructive objectives in domains from education to health was integration into a universal service free at the point of access through increased co-ordination by the state (Jones, 2003). In education, the form this mechanism took was comprehensivisation, predicated on equality of opportunity. Its champion in government, Tony Crosland, saw it as ‘part of the further enhancement of citizenship among all sections of the community’ (Dean, 1998: 86), illuminating the close relationship contemporary actors envisaged between ideas, ideologies and structures.

However, welfarism’s ‘encounter with a variety of vested interests’ (Jones, 2003: 16) blunted its realisation of some of the 1944 Education Act’s goals and provisions, including those for compulsory nursery education and the establishment of technical schools (Jones, 2003). On a conceptual level, Newman (2007) describes how, in institutionalising within its own departments and schools notions of ‘publicness’ (p. 28), the state created an association between the public and bureaucracy/professional power which reformers later exploited to dismantle the welfarist project, permitting them to construct and sell:

... two starkly opposed chronotopics—the grey, slow bureaucracy and politically correct, committee, corridor grimness of the city hall welfare state as against the fast, adventurous, carefree, gung-ho, open-plan, computerised, individualism of choice, autonomous ‘enterprises’ and sudden opportunity. (Ball, 1998: 124)

This matters because the rejection of welfarist principles prompted a different relationship between the state and its citizens, from one in which goods such as education were constituted as public and distributed accordingly to service users identified by Needham (2006) as clients, to one where these goods became commodifiable, their consumption dependent upon individuals’ ability to develop
their own capacity to access social and intellectual as well as economic capital (Newman, 2007). It is, however, inaccurate to portray the welfarist education system as unproblematic or as representative of a golden age. As Johnson (1989: 95) points out, ‘the strength of the New Right had to be understood in terms of the weaknesses, and especially the “unpopular” character, of the educational politics that preceded it’. According to Apple (1989: 7), the reasons for the shift away from welfarism, or social democracy, went beyond the stigmatisation of bureaucracy:

The social democratic goal of expanding equality of opportunity (itself a rather limited reform) has lost much of its political potency and its ability to mobilize people. The “panic” over falling standards and illiteracy, the fears of violence in schools, and the concern with the destruction of family values and religiosity, have all had an effect ... Since so many parents are justifiably concerned about the economic futures of their children — in an economy that is increasingly conditioned by lowered wages, unemployment, capital flight and insecurity — rightist discourse connects with the experiences of many working-class and lower-middle-class people.

Concerns have also been raised about the way in which welfarism essentialised and pathologised statuses constructed through social policy as non-normative and/or inferior concerning race, gender, sexuality and disability (Clarke and Newman, 1997). So, it is simplistic to conceptualise the welfare or social-democratic state solely as the stigmatised ideological and historical point of departure for the “modernising” reform programme explored here, or indeed to idealise it. Structurally, welfarism survives in pre-11 schools or in those rare examples calling themselves comprehensive or, far more commonly, community. It survives too in headteachers’ narratives in tension with neoliberalism and neoconservatism (e.g. Gewirtz, 2002); welfarism is, in fact, conceptually necessary for the active (re)production of neoliberal/conservative ideas, forms and positions through stigmatisation and abjection (see, e.g., Kirkup and Paris, 2008). The first of these co-ideologies, neoliberalism, is explored below.

2.2.2. Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a globally dominant manifestation of late capitalism, notwithstanding the ‘tremendous institutional variety of forms of capitalism at national, sub-national and supra-national levels’ (Carvalho and Rodrigues, 2006: 344). It is a totalising discourse constituted, *inter alia*, of a set of policies, principles and beliefs which, whilst ‘often incoherent, unstable and even
contradictory’ (Shamir, 2008: 3), nonetheless seeks to structure social as well as economic relations (Wood, 1997). In other words, ‘neo-liberalism is about both money and minds’ (Ball, 2012a: 3). Ong (2007: 5) explains the persistence of neo-liberalism and demonstrates the virtue of its heterogeneity by conceptualising it ‘not as a standardized universal apparatus, but a migratory technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstances’. As such, it is not so much an inevitable as an opportunistic product of capitalism, finding new forms of expression, or at least emphasis, in the spaces between its own discursive imperatives and the conditions and purposes it encounters.

Notwithstanding this geo-political and temporal adaptiveness, the following broad tenets may be identified, though these are not found in all instantiations and their proportionate significance to one another too alters greatly from site to site. First, marketised competition, facilitated through free trade, is constructed as the best mechanism to regulate all human activities, relations, institutions and products, such that these are permeated with and re-defined through profit and commodification. Its second tenet is that despite ‘a stress on responsibility at the community level’ (Ong, 2007: 4), neoliberalism is individualised; these individuals are constructed as ‘economically self-interested ... and the best judge of his/her own interests and needs’ (Olssen and Peters, 2005: 314). In empowering individual consumers by facilitating choice ‘at the expense of the (professional) provider’ (Ranson, 2003: 465), neoliberalism systematises what Carvalho and Rodrigues (2006: 335) call this ‘unrestricted decentralized individual decision-making’ which they critique for its inherent inability to provide for non-commodifiable and/or communitarily held values-based goods, and for the perverse aggregate material and social consequences of individualised transactions. As action is individualised, so is inaction; difficulties accessing societal goods are re-imagined as ‘a problem for the individual’ (Newman, 2007: 33), and as a deficit in that individual, to be addressed through policies in education such as the pupil premium or Sure Start. A corollary of these two tenets is that people are assumed to be, and increasingly become motivated through monetary remuneration. This can be seen, for example, in the reduction of teacher performance management in England to a transactional “exchange” of improved teaching for movement up a pay scale rather than for values-based, altruistic or professional returns. This tendency exemplifies what Hirsch (1977)
calls capitalism’s move towards ‘increasingly explicit social organization without a supporting social morality’ (p. 12). As I shall argue below in my description of neoconservatism and its relationship with neoliberalism, however, Hirsch’s (1977) assumption that any “plug-and-play” framework would necessarily be morally remediating is problematic.

Third, this responsive regulation through markets is constructed as a sort of “freedom” and privileged in opposition to planned (local) state or institutional action, which, through ‘discourses of derision’ (Ball, 1990: 22), is dialectically stigmatised as bureaucratic, ineffective (Ball, 1998) and dependency inducing (Bines, 1995). Similarly, and by extension, knowledge produced by those closest to the consequences of the actions it prompts is privileged over that produced by the state or even “expert” institutions. The mechanistic derision operationalising this is exemplified in a speech given by the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, to the right-leaning think tank Policy Exchange:

> In the past, the education debate has been dominated by education academics — which is why so much of the research and evidence on how children actually learn has been so poor. Now, thankfully, teachers are taking control of their profession’s intellectual life, taking the lead in pioneering educational research and creating a living evidence base. (Gove, 2013b)

This rejection of state/institutional/expert knowledge is reflected by some functionalist scholars researching school leadership, e.g.:

> ...the educational argument for decentralization is that decisions made at a local level, along with the involvement of parents and the local community, are more likely to be effective and bring about improvement than those made at a distance by a bureaucratic government department. (Anderson, 2005: 80)

Fourth, the role of the state consequently is to privatise and commission rather than provide or (re)distribute (formerly) public goods; to promote through policy normative conceptualisations of these goods that emphasise how they (should) benefit the economy; to steer that provision and its consumption – ultimately, human behaviour – through targets, audit and performativity towards the entrepreneurial, efficient and effective (Ball, 1998; Newman, 2007; Olssen and Peters, 2005); and ‘[to enable] citizens to develop their capacities’ to take advantage of that provision (Newman, 2007: 33) or more bleakly, to become reconstituted as consumers (Needham, 2003). Public goods such as education are
therefore reconceptualised as private and commodifiable and adopt ‘the methods and values of business’ (Ball, 1998: 125) or indeed are increasingly privatised (Ball, 2007, 2012a; Ranson, 2003) through the ‘blurring [of] the boundaries between state and private sector providers’ (Whitty, 2008: 166).

These tenets have come to underpin the structural formations found in England in the following indicative ways. First, simply stated, marketisation requires a variety of innovative products to offer consumers. This premise is driving the school-type diversification examined here. Second, individualisation transforms citizens into consumers (Needham, 2003) who are to engage with education as an instrumental transaction concerning them and their interests alone. This tenet assumes a rational actor who privileges economic markers, yet this construction serves to mask the ways in which choice is operationalised differentially in ways which privilege the more socio-economically advantaged (Coldron et al., 2010; Exley, 2013, 2014; Gabay-Egozi, 2015; Reay, 2001). This is even the case where parents are ostensibly choosing lower-attaining schools so that their children engage with local communities in all their diversity (James et al., 2010). Considered in combination with the first point above, what this means for structures is that there are both increasing numbers of school types and that these are hierarchised, with the exercise of school choice providing the mechanism for creating and/or reproducing structural inequalities. Third, the discursive privileging of (headteacher) autonomy along with the stigmatisation of “bureaucratic” local authorities means that these latter are being structured out of the landscape of provision. New types, mostly based on academies, consequently are funded directly from central government, with local authorities unrepresented in governance arrangements. Fourth, the re-configured role of the state in privatising and commissioning is being taken up through the selling, or transfer, of formerly public assets such as school buildings and land to private actors, including corporate and religious institutions in the creation of new school types. This should be considered alongside my third point above: it is not simply that ideologically, these assets are to be sold to shrink the state, it is that local authorities as their present owners are understood as less fit to hold them — ‘outside sponsors are seen as a force for change and a source of dynamism and expertise’ (Woods and Simkins, 2014: 327). This has a further, serendipitous effect; the state is sufficiently removed from public institutions to absolve itself of political responsibility for their condition (Leys, 2003).


2.2.3. Neoconservatism

Neoliberalism discursively totalises through existing state technologies, ideologies and apparatus, creating relationships conceptualised as ‘promiscuous entanglements of global and local logics [which] crystallize different conditions of possibility’ (Ong, 2007: 5). One such concurrent ideology is neoconservatism, with which it shares an ‘uneasy coexistence’ (Carvalho and Rodrigues, 2006: 340), or a ‘complicated alliance’ (Apple, 2011: 22). Newman (2007) detects neoconservatism in discourses of the right and left as well as those of other advanced welfare states through policies which favour ‘responsibility and respect’ to engender ‘a new (and not so new) moralism in public life’ (p. 33). Even shortly after the introduction of ERA, the contradictions between this moralising turn and claims of “modern” market-based reform had been noted:

Is it [Thatcherism] a reforming, modernizing movement, a ‘Great Education Reform’ — as he [Kenneth Baker, then Education Secretary] says it is? Or is it a return to traditional educational “standards”, an educational Restoration — as she [Thatcher] says it is? (Johnson, 1989: 95, original emphasis)

This collocation does not resolve Hirsch’s (1977) moral problem with capitalism, which, for him, does not produce a moral vacuum potentially addressable by any ancillary code, but instead actively produces an egoistic morality aligned with the pursuit of private and essentially individualistic economic goals by enterprises, consumers and workers’ (p. 117). This requires mitigation, if not amelioration through a morality fostering ‘altruism, trust, reciprocity, commitment or a sense of duty to oneself and to others’ (Carvalho and Rodrigues, 2006: 342). Neoconservatism arguably attempts only the last two of these, through its emphasis on personal responsibility. This has an intellectual coherence with neoliberalism’s promotion of “enterprise culture” based on the laissez-faire model of the self-reliant individual’ (Shore and Wright, 1999: 560) and its individualisation of blame, which can be seen in Alexiadou’s (2002) study across the political spectrum of discourses of educational and social exclusion. Her participants saw it as the responsibility of the government to offer initiatives, and ... [of] the “disaffected” youths themselves to become “employable” (p. 75). Neoconservatism extends this principle of blame to include groups of people such as the socio-economically disadvantaged (Courtney, 2014c), left-leaning intelligentsia and “incompetent” teachers, or institutions such as trade unions (Carter and Stevenson, 2012), left-leaning local authorities (Whitty, 2008) and
media organisations. Thus, the neoliberal project is politicised and moralised, though not in the way envisaged by Hirsch. Points of intellectual coherence notwithstanding, it is perhaps more useful to use Ong’s (2007: 3) concept of an ‘assemblage’ to understand how neoliberalism and neoconservatism each partly constructs the other in ‘situated sets of elements and circumstances’, making it useless to attempt to pinpoint where one starts and the other ends (and partly explaining alternative definitions of each). Conceptualising it in this way resolves an apparent paradox; the neoliberal willingness to centralise power and construct subjects through audit, which makes more sense through the lens of neoconservative ideology than through that of pure Hayekian economics. This ideology, rather than neoliberalism, demands that curricula comprise “traditional” subjects to foster ‘traditional British’ (Whitty, 2008: 169) or ‘Victorian’ (Gunter and Fitzgerald, 2011: 287) values, which ‘misconstrues and then basically ignores the intense debates over whose knowledge should be taught … and establishes a false consensus on what is supposedly common in the cultures of so many nations’ (Apple, 2011: 22). In England, this state control of the curriculum has been operationalised through the National Curriculum and the assessment system it produced (Whitty, 2008). Neo-conservatism rests too on a conceptualisation of ability which is more or less fixed. The aspiration evoked by exhorting all children to achieve to their potential belies the ceiling that “potential” here implies and constitutes. This has consequences for school structure, pedagogy and purpose. In an educational framework in which children have fixed aptitudes and abilities, it makes sense to select the most able, to create schools for the vocationally or technically minded and to teach them accordingly so that they can subsequently find employment congruent with these capacities and dispositions. Inherent in this project is the promotion of an elite (Klausenitzer, in Pongratz, 2006). This neo-Fordist aspect of neoconservatism underpins conceptually and ideologically much of the diversification in school types captured in the present study.

So far, through this adumbration of welfarism, neoliberalism and neoconservatism, I have explained how the former has ceded to the two latter, which have been made to work together and have constructed one another to supply the discursive default for policy-makers in England, thereby creating the conditions for school-type diversification to flourish. In the next section, I shall set out what I mean by diversification, beginning with the way I am distinguishing this notion from diversity.
2.3. From diversity to diversification

There has been diversity within state-provided/supported English education since its beginnings in the nineteenth century, when formerly private schools established by a range of charitable and other foundations, and Dame schools, each with particular modes of governance and ideological or religious affiliations, were incorporated as state schools to constitute, ‘in partial, halting and reluctant fashion’, an education system (Ball, 2008: 59). Walford (2014) identifies therefrom a consequent long-standing ideological ‘reluctance of governments to fund schooling’ (p. 316) in England, for whom ‘[t]he responsibility for provision was, and still is, shared by a multitude of providers — predominantly the Christian churches’ (p. 316). Successive governments have therefore demonstrated unwillingness or inability to dismantle completely previous structures to homogenise the system or to disavow historical educational co-providers. Two factors interpose here; first, unconducive political circumstances. Exemplifying this is the Labour government’s failure in 1968 to integrate public schools into the state system owing to exactly such (Hillman, 2010). A second factor underpinning the tolerance of diversity is political expediency (Whitty, 2008). Where a school type is seen as successful, such as faith or grammar schools, ministers are less likely to desire its abolition for fear of provoking parent voters.

Immediately prior to the diversificatory policies from circa 1986 explored below, the educational landscape was structurally relatively stable. There were three principal legal types of state-maintained school in England existing alongside the independent sector: voluntary, direct grant and county (Mason and Windrow, 1972). All these types were sub-divided further (although not in law) according to pupil age and sex. Voluntary schools were survivors from those first schools established by charitable and religious organisations ‘absorbed into the local public education system, with varying degrees of financial support from public funds’ (p. 166) in the mid-nineteenth century. Fitz et al. (1993) explain that direct-grant schools numbered 176; were autonomous of the local authority, charging fees of those pupils it selected for entry; and 25% of their places were reserved for LA-nominated pupils, whose fees were paid by central government. County schools, whose structural features and maintenance were the remit of the local authority, constituted the majority. Crook (2002) describes how this localism
produced a great deal of variation within the ostensible binary of selective or comprehensive in response to a variously hostile, neutral or encouraging central state. As Crook (2002) points out, comprehensives were not legally instituted, but were a local response to the perceived unfairness of the prevailing selective tripartite system. Their national establishment was enabled by the requirement in the 1944 Education Act that LEAs submit a development plan outlining their structural response to that statute’s requirement that they provide adequate primary and secondary county and voluntary school places. Comprehensive education signified, in this historical context, a new sort of social justice based on equality of opportunity; all children were to be given a chance in a *common school* to obtain the goods of an education system previously denied a large number of them owing to selection. That comprehensives were developed in distinctive ways by local authorities, sometimes encouraged by and sometimes in opposition to state policy meant that what they shared was an ideology, more or less successfully operationalised, rather than structure. Crook (2002: 254) writes that ‘more than 1,400 comprehensive (including middle) schools were established between 1970 and 1974’ and, as noted by Haydn (2004: 418), ‘had become the dominant form of secondary provision in England and Wales’. However, the “brave new world” connotations of comprehensives exemplified by the opening in 1954 of the first purpose-built comprehensive, Kidbrooke School in south-east London (Crook, 2002; Hattersley, 2004) had faded by 1998. Newman (2007) and Ball’s (2008) metaphor of *sedimentation* explains how meanings associated with comprehensives changed so utterly. New forms of schooling arise from new political and ideological motivations and discourses; these over-lay like sedimentary rock strata the older forms beneath, which, though de-privileged and discursively stigmatised, often survive. However, their meaning is altered under the discursive pressure of more recent neoliberal and neoconservative layers of reform. Haydn (2004), recounts the ‘valediction for the comprehensive era’ (p. 420) of the Secretary of State for Education, Estelle Morris, who concluded in 2002, ‘We thought the comprehensive system would solve all problems. We thought that opening up opportunity for all would help raise attainment across the board. But we must be honest and admit it has not happened’ (p. 420).

Comprehensives have become subject to ‘discourses of derision’ (Ball, 1990: 22) to justify a policy of diversification which is largely defined in abjection of their relationship with the LA and of the democratic, egalitarian values underpinning them. The New Labour architect of their replacement, for instance, called them ‘a
cancer at the heart of English society’ (Adonis 2012: xii). Michael Gove, in a speech to the Durand Academy, said of Lord Harris, sponsor of further academies and business mogul:

His academy in Peckham gets half its students to secure five good passes at GCSE including English and Maths. When the school was run by the local authority only five percent of children got those passes … Phil is able to support state education so generously because of his success in business. (Gove, 2011)

Comprehensives and their modes of governance, then, represent the stigmatised point of departure ideologically, structurally and discursively for subsequent education policies aiming to “modernise” through diversification.

2.4. The diversification of school types within an educational quasi-market

By the mid-1970s, this picture of tolerated and relatively limited diversity started to undergo a profound shift. The catalyst for this was economic: the oil crisis of 1973 was seen as evidence of ‘the collapse of the economics of the golden age and the inability of welfare state societies to sustain economic growth, low rates of inflation and high levels of employment’ (Jones, 2003: 106), and so ‘politicians turned to education both for part of the explanation and, less worthily, to seek scapegoats’ (Barber, 1994: 355). New concerns consequently arose about economic return and accountability for that return which are still playing out today. Following the “Great Debate” of the late 1970s and in response to the accompanying Black Papers where the previously “fringe” ideas associated with neoliberalism were aired and legitimated, education policy was moved from a focus on systemic improvement through comprehensivisation to one on ‘standards, curriculum and teacher training’ (Crook, 2002: 258). Central to this was the construction of a quasi-market comprising differentiated schools, with new types enjoying what was constructed as “freedom” from “bureaucratic” local authorities in order to raise standards through competition and create a new, more responsive form of consumer accountability (Ranson, 2003). In this conceptualisation, accountability is bottom-up and top-down: competition and the need to satisfy consumers are intended to produce systemic improvements, whilst central governments simultaneously adopt ‘a much more active role through steering and direct intervention’ (Woods and Simkins, 2014: 325) through, for
instance, standardised pupil assessments, school inspection by a new national body, Ofsted, and a national curriculum.

The beginnings of the quasi-market came in 1980, when parents for the first time could indicate their preferred school. Nonetheless, the most significant attempts to introduce market principles to the education system were seen from 1986, with legislation in the Education Reform Act 1988. This, *inter alia*, altered schools’ funding mechanisms so that money was allocated largely per pupil recruited, constituting, along with increasing diversification of provision, the structural framework to operationalise the quasi-market. Although neoconservatism has greatly influenced this policy, diversification is not just a policy of the political right; *all* governments since 1986 have been ideologically committed to school choice and diversity as mechanisms for systemic improvement as well as for individual (parent/consumer) empowerment (Whitty, 2008; Woods and Simkins, 2014). In this discourse, children are both consumers and products of diversified schooling; they are guided to select that type which “fits” their inclinations, expectations and learning style (Woods and Simkins, 2014); the school in turn ensures that it ‘produce[s] the right type of human capital’ (Gunter, 2012: 10), fit to compete in the global economic race. This goes hand-in-hand with selection, which as I show below is fundamental to diversificatory policies.

### 2.5. Key initiatives in the diversification of school types

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of key initiatives from diversificatory policies in England; from it, a number of arguments may be made. First, with the exception of the specialist schools programme, a pre-condition of diversification has consistently been the structural/legal removal of the local authority in terms of resource-management, funding, majority membership of the governing body, ownership of land, employment of staff and in later versions of the policy, staff pay and conditions. As West and Bailey (2013) note, these developments:

> ... have resulted in the school-based education system in England changing radically from a national system, locally administered via democratically elected local education authorities, to a centrally controlled system with the Secretary of State for Education having legally binding contractual arrangements with an increasing number of private education providers. (p.138)
The freedom also from private interests suggested in the governance arrangements of, for instance, that majority of academies known as “converters” is illusory, since all “autonomous” schools are structurally susceptible to future take-over, or sponsorship. The specialist schools programme constitutes a sort of diversification-lite, in that the legal status and governance structure of the school remained unchanged, with diversification being manifested de facto through the curriculum only, and even then still within the national curriculum. Second, exemplified in Table 1, column six, diversification has required exemptions from statutes regulating provision in LA-maintained schools in order to be meaningful; here, the national curriculum, exemplifying the tension between centralising and decentralising tendencies in policy (Gunter and Chapman, 2009; Woods and Simkins, 2014). Third, selection is a necessary element of diversification, since that policy requires children to be sorted into groups which respond to the particular school characteristics on offer. Nevertheless, “selection”, like “comprehensive”, has unwelcome resonances that make its deployment in marketing difficult, and so in recent years has been concealed behind language of aptitude.

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Key and notes
~ It is possible.
by apt. By aptitude.
1 But no party-political LA representative either.
2 In practice, all selected on faith grounds.
3 If community/VC, no.
4 Specialist schools, academies and free schools with a religious designation can select for that faith up to the limits and under the circumstances permitted by their legal type.

Table 1. Key initiatives in the diversification of school types.
Finally, column four reveals the phenomenon identified by Woods and Simkins (2014), whereby ‘diversity of schools is accompanied by an emerging diversity of governance’, with ‘an intermingling of hierarchical governance ... self-governance ... co-governance ... and democratic governance’ (p. 328). In the following sub-sections, I shall adumbrate an indicative selection of key developments in successive governments’ attempts to diversify school provision.

2.5.1. City Colleges

Thatcher’s Conservative government extended principles of market ideology to include diversity in provision when it created City Colleges in 1986, which may be either City Technology Colleges or City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts. (Technical inaccuracy notwithstanding, I shall refer to both these incarnations hereafter as CTCs, as this is how they appear in most of the literature and even in the Government’s own database of school types, Edubase, where one of the remaining three CTCs is actually a CCTA.) These were funded directly from central government, but crucially were to receive financial support from private sponsors; these would also be represented on the governing body. CTCs also had a distinctive curriculum. Their emphasis on technical or technological skills was an attempt ‘to remedy the long failure to establish ... [such] within English secondary education’ (Edwards et al., 1992: 83) in line with the needs of an advanced economy. Such attempts can be traced from the secondary technical schools of the tripartite system, through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) from 1982 (Mcleod, 1988) and CTCs to contemporary University Technical Colleges. As such, CTCs were meant to provide only for that minority of technically minded/skilled pupils “ill catered for” by comprehensives, and whom CTCs were permitted to select on the basis of their aptitude for technical education (West and Bailey, 2013). Nonetheless, CTCs represented the first introduction of structural variety into the educational landscape in order to facilitate meaningful parental choice. Whitty (1990), for instance, noted that they were ‘intended to increase competition with both LEA-maintained and independent schools’ (p. 106). This was no zero-sum game; competition was meant to prompt neighbouring schools to raise the quality of their provision. Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education and Science who introduced the programme, confirmed this in his speech at the Industrial Society Conference:

Commitment is reinforced by choice. That is why I am so encouraged that schools around Kingshurst [CTC] are already making greater
efforts to *market themselves* to parents, and to remind parents that the maintained sector too offers choice and can aspire to compete on quality. This is precisely the reinvigorating result we expected from the setting-up of CTCs. (Baker, 1989: para. 6, emphasis added)

Whitty, too, saw evidence that existing schools were ‘rethinking their marketing strategy’ (1990: 109) in the face of competition from CTCs. However, only fifteen were ever created, owing in part to the obligation on sponsors to meet all capital costs. Most converted to academies from 2010.

### 2.5.2. Grant-Maintained (GM) schools

GM schools, also featuring in the 1988 Education Reform Act, foreshadowed the funding arrangements for the future academies. As Fitz et al. (1993) explain, GM schools were non-fee-paying, funded directly from central government, had no political party affiliates on the governing body, and had powers over admissions, staffing and finances. Their purpose was ‘to diversify school provision; to increase competition between schools; and to enhance parental choice’ (p. 10). Furthermore, “opting out” of local-authority control was intended to alter the balance of power away from these “producers” — often Labour-held — characterised as ‘inefficient, ineffective and insufficiently accountable’ (Fitz et al., 1993: 12) and in favour of parents as educational “consumers”. A New Labour government came to power in 1997 with a manifesto commitment to abolish GM schools. Andrew Adonis, policy advisor and ‘tenacious midwife’ (Ryan, 2008: 1) of the academies project, remembers how Tony Blair had ‘only reluctantly consented to this’ (Adonis, 2012: 30) because of his ideological commitment to the autonomy they conferred. GM schools were consequently brought back into the state system *only to a degree* by creating a new legal type in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, the foundation school, which retained much of the autonomy over governance and admissions GM schools enjoyed compared to community schools, and to which almost all these former GM schools converted.

### 2.5.3. Sponsored GM schools

The 1993 Education Act enabled new schools to open with GM status and a sponsor, to ‘widen choice and diversity of schools’ (Walford, 2014: 320). As with later free schools, existing independent schools could use the Act to enter the state system. Walford (2014) describes how all new GM schools had to provide around 15% of costs towards capital expenditure and buildings. A challenging application process meant that only seven proposals were accepted by May 1997,
of which six came from existing independent Catholic schools. The incoming Labour government in 1997, whilst eradicating the category, did accept a further seven schools into the state system as voluntary aided. All the sponsors were religious foundations, including Muslim, Jewish and Seventh-Day Adventist. Only one of all these schools was entirely new.

2.5.4. Specialist schools

Bell and West (2003) describe how specialist schools were created in 1993 when the UK Conservative government invited VA and GM schools to apply to their new Technology Colleges Programme, which 'had broad aims of helping schools to develop particular strengths and raising standards in technology in partnership with the private sector' (p. 274). The following year, all maintained schools were able to apply when Modern Foreign Languages became an available specialism, followed in 1996 by the arts and sports. Labour governments from 1997, supporting the ideological case for diversifying school provision, expanded the programme to include three sorts of arts college (media, performing and visual); business and enterprise; science; mathematics and computing; music; humanities; and engineering, from amongst which schools could bid for up to two. Special schools could choose from four specialisms derived from the SEN Code of Practice: cognition and learning; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; communication and interaction; and physical and/or sensory needs. Specialist schools were awarded additional funding on designation. They taught the national curriculum, but were expected to attain higher standards in their specialism, collaborate with their sponsors from the private sector and benefit local schools and their community. Through these measures, they were intended to contribute to systemic improvements. From 2004, high-attaining schools were invited to apply for designation as High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS), adopting a second or third specialism from a number of options. Some were curricular: languages; mathematics and computing; science; and SEN/inclusion. Others were non-curricular, i.e., Training School; Leading Edge Partnership Programme; Raising Achievement Partnership Programme; Applied Learning or Youth Sport Trust Leadership Programme (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2009). All were intended to demonstrate impact 'over the longer term for the benefits of all HPS [High Performing Specialist] schools and the wider group of collaborative partners' (p. 14). By 2011, 95% of all maintained schools had at least one specialism, and the programme administratively ceased (DfE, 2012).
2.5.5. Academies

Andrew Adonis intended the academies programme under Labour from 2000 to:

...replace “bog standard” comprehensives ... with successful all-ability schools ... to help overcome other fundamental weaknesses of the comprehensive era: the rigid and damaging divisions between state and private schools; the low morale and appeal, and weak leadership, of the state teaching profession [and] the misconceived role of local education authorities as school managers... (Adonis, 2012: 11)

To achieve this, he drew on the CTC model, whose ‘high perform[ance] and ... exceptional student academic progress’ (Adonis, 2012: 56), he attributed to ‘highly capable and effective governing sponsor-managers ... [in whose schools] [s]trong headteachers were appointed and supported’. The way in which these private sponsors ‘ran their governing bodies in a businesslike way’ (p. 56, emphasis added), and similar models in the U.S. and Sweden influenced Adonis profoundly. The new “city academies”, what the Academies Commission (2013) identify as Mark I of three distinct phases, were conceived to replace low-attaining, urban comprehensives. Their sponsors were required initially to contribute £2 million towards the capital costs with the government contributing the rest, although this varied and diminished as the programme evolved into Mark II from around 2006, with permitted sponsors then including universities and other educational organisations, and ‘tighter control of funding agreements’ (Academies Commission, 2013: 22). Entirely new sponsored academies were also possible by 2004 — free schools in all but name (Walford, 2014). Some sponsoring organisations grew to operate multiple academies, or national chains; for example, the largest, United Learning, runs 53 as of August 2015 (United Learning, 2015) and is effectively performing many of the functions of a local authority with neither democratic accountability nor geographical coherence.

Woods and Simkins (2014: 331) identify a chain’s characteristics as:

... non-profit/charitable ownership, management of a number of schools, shared leadership and management structures, a shared mission and possibly pedagogical approach, and a “home office” offering central support, accountability and direction.

Woods and Simkins also identify school-led chains, which ‘have many similar characteristics to national chains, but they are initiated and led by successful schools rather than non-profit or charitable organization and often operate on a regional or local basis’ (2014: 331). By 2010, when the Coalition government
took office, there were 203 academies in total. The new Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, adopted, expanded and accelerated the academies programme in Mark III so that schools rated “outstanding” by Ofsted, or “performing well”, could convert, or academise, with or without a sponsor; “failing” schools could be forced to academise; new forms of academy were created including University Technical Colleges (UTCs), studio schools and alternative provision academies (replacing Pupil Referral Units); and primaries became eligible to academise. The Academies Commission described this as ‘a new educational landscape … [which] has developed with astonishing speed’ (2013: 4). By November 2014 (the latest date for which DfE figures are available), out of 24,709 schools in England, 4,548 (21.6%) were academies. Of these, 1264 were sponsored and a further 252 were free schools, which may or may not have a sponsor (DfE, 2014b). Academies are consequently a varied “type”. Uniting them, as with earlier CTCs, is their autonomy from local-authority “bureaucracy”, discursively constructed as a pre-requisite for and producer of aspiration and innovation in leadership and governance (Academies Commission, 2013; Chapman and Salokangas, 2012; Glatter, 2012; McGinity, 2015), although many (e.g. Glatter, 2012) doubt that academies in chains with a powerful sponsor really have significant autonomy.

The Academies Act 2010 established the legal framework for the new school types appearing subsequently: the UTC and studio school, for instance, are both types of academy; what distinguishes these, as I shall argue in chapter four, can be explained largely through branding. Complicating this ostensible picture of legal homogeneity is the fact that model funding agreements notwithstanding, each academy is constituted under a contract agreed between its governors/trustees and the Department for Education. Since the particulars of these vary, so then do the legal rights of parents and pupils, and Acts of Parliament can override aspects of an academy’s funding agreement. This heterogeneity is partly a product of the evolution of the programme over time (Wolfe, 2014) and partly deliberate: ‘academies … are predominantly being constructed as sites intended to enhance the growing influence of private versions of entrepreneurialism’ (Woods et al., 2007: 253), whose desired innovativeness pre-supposes the legal capacity to act differently from other schools. To this end, academies are permitted to operate outside the statutory frameworks regulating maintained schools concerning staff
qualifications, pay and conditions, the curriculum, the length of the school day and school-served food, and are their own admissions authority.

2.5.6. Free schools

Free schools are, ‘new schools, primary, secondary or all-through, funded directly by government, which can be set up by groups of parents, community organisations, charities and religious and business organisations under the 2010 Academy Act ... [and which represent] most uncompromisingly the market dynamic’ (Hatcher, 2011: 485) in that they ‘encourage the supply side of the market’ (Walford, 2014: 323). This diversity makes it difficult to make generalisations about their cultures or structures as a “type”, although as academies, they enjoy the same regulatory freedoms, funding mechanism and independence of the local authority described above. New here means new to the state sector; a significant proportion comprises former independent schools. It is a “flagship” programme of the Coalition whose estimated cost to March 2014 was £1.1 billion (National Audit Office, 2013), producing 252 schools by November 2014. In April 2014, 70% of free schools were not full (Garner, 2014), and in fact over a quarter of the total capital costs for the programme has come from opening schools in areas ‘with no forecast need for extra school places’ (National Audit Office, 2013: 7). This is despite the government’s aim for the programme of reducing social inequality by locating these schools in significant numbers where ‘there’s a desperate need for places’ (Gove, 2011 in Hatcher, 2011: 494). Hatcher suggests that this aim might be further undermined by covert or overt selection in free schools; through exercising their right to select up to 10% for their aptitude in the school’s specialism; through gerrymandering the catchment area; through offering a curriculum designed to appeal to certain, i.e. middle-class parents; and through taking on a religious character — this permitting selection on faith grounds of 50%.

2.5.7. Studio schools

Studio schools exemplify the diversification within the academy legal framework which is dominating currently, and which also includes university technical colleges. The studio school brand is owned by the Studio Schools Trust; in that sense they represent the solidification and extension of a branded chain identity into a whole new type, although currently, and as with UTCs, these trusts’ influence on governance is purposively limited. Created in 2010 following the
Coalition government’s taking office, they are self-proclaimed all-ability (‘comprehensive’ being derided) small schools whose ideal pupil nonetheless adheres to a recognisable “type”. S/he responds to the hands-on, project-based learning offered here and would expect to leave with mostly level-two, rather than level-three qualifications (those students’ needs are to be met by UTCs). The fate of these pupils is to be a business-sector employee, for which the studio-school experience pedagogically and culturally prepares them. Like the (local) businesses which co-construct their curriculum, ‘Studio Schools operate an extended school day and have enterprise and entrepreneurship at their heart’ (Studio Schools Trust, 2014: 1). Aspiring (social) scientists or philosophers would be ill developed here, but then there is little requirement for these occupations in the ‘real world’ (p. 1) constructed by the trust. By 2016, there will be around 50 studio schools, mostly in areas with communities whose prior educational attainment is low, or where there are significant pockets of low attainment, such as Nuneaton, Luton and Bradford (Studio Schools Trust, 2014b).

2.6. School leadership and the reform agenda

Leadership has been increasingly privileged in policy under successive governments as a means of achieving the education reform sketched out in this chapter. Tensions exist: high-stakes accountability structures, exemplified by Ofsted’s inspection regime, place headteachers in a uniquely liable and precarious position (Courtney, 2014c; Thomson, 2009): this contrasts with the distributed turn in leadership modelled and proselytised by, amongst others, the principal body for leadership development in England, the National College for School Leadership (Bowen and Bateman, 2008). Policies reflect and reproduce assumptions about the purposes and possibilities of school leadership. Current assumptions about leadership include the notion that that of academies is characterised by vitality and autonomy; that headteachers who retain a strong, formal link with their local authority represent the ancien régime and their leadership is restricted; that leadership in new types of school invokes entrepreneurialism (Gove, 2011).

What is known about leadership tends to focus on structurally transversal themes such as equity and inclusion (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010); models of leadership (Bush, 2003); broad movements such as the rise in practices associated with New
Public Management (Hall, 2013; Wright, 2001) or the extent to which certain leadership practices or qualities (Hargreaves and Harris, 2011) or interventions (Earley and Evans, 2004) improve schools or increase their effectiveness. Where school type is a variable within a research design or the focus of analysis, the focus is predominantly on whether a specific type of school produces the benefits claimed for pupils’ outcomes (Gorard, 2014), or whose introduction into the system is studied as an example of policy enactment within a (neo-liberal) ideological framework (Gunter, 2011).

The purpose and scope of school leadership are contested between two major paradigms (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003). First are those, mostly located in the normative, functional part of the field, for whom leadership may be restricted or enabled by a policy landscape, but essentially, characteristics of successful leadership are identifiable, their promulgation is a key function of research and one of the main purposes of leadership is unproblematically conceptualised as the raising of standards (see e.g. Chapman and Harris, 2004; Hargreaves and Harris, 2011; Leithwood, 2005; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Critical scholars see leadership as a political construct which operationalises a teleologically-focused neoliberal/ neoconservative project (Eacott, 2011; Gunter and Forrester, 2009; Gunter, 2012; Hall, Gunter, and Bragg, 2013; Hatcher and Hirtt, 1999; McGinity, 2015; Rogers, 2012; Stevenson, 2007; Taysum and Gunter, 2008; Thomson, 2001, 2009, 2010; Woods et al., 2007; Wright, 2011; Youngs, 2009). The proliferation of new school types, differentiated mostly through the “type” of pupil each hopes to attract, and thence through curriculum and pedagogy, is understood as being part of this project. It requires ‘reform-ready’ leaders to ‘secure local reform delivery’ (Gunter, 2012: 4) and produces new forms of leadership and a ‘leadership industry’ (p. 3) to service them. This continues a process started by the Labour governments of 1997–2010, which Gunter (2012), argues conjured and codified leadership as transformational and crucial from “common-sense” beliefs and assumptions that drew on and reproduced a neoliberal discourse privileging business solutions to “the problem” of standards of educational attainment (see also Hatcher and Hirtt, 1999). Along with this formulation’s concomitant rejection of outmoded local-authority knowledge, this collocation with business permitted its adoption as “modernising”. The resulting conceptualisation of leadership was ‘constructed and promoted as the means of suturing together a vast array of interventions in the curriculum, staffing, lesson
planning and assessment, and to evidence success or be accountable for failure’ (Gunter, 2012: 5). This discourse was reinforced and promulgated by complex networks of policy actors and compliant academics, these latter mostly in the functional school improvement and effectiveness fields, since characteristics of measurability, scalability and certainty were attractive to policy-makers looking for universal(isable) and relatively simple “truths” capable of being “scaled up”. In return for accepting these truths came higher pay and status for headteachers, although these came at a cost to professional identities and practice (Woods and Simkins, 2014). First, identities; these were re-constituted through separating the heads’ role from teachers’ and privileging (and mandating) the business-derived competencies and qualities now constituting that role through national standards (Gunter, 2012). The lead professional was obliged to become the CEO (Grace, 1995). Furthermore, particular emphasis was placed on "transformational" leaders (Burns, 1978; Conger, 1999), who, through charisma, persuade followers to adopt not just their goals, but what is constructed as their superior values and morals (Allix, 2000). Examples of these leaders were modelled as exemplars, troubling the identities of the uncharismatic majority (Gunter, 2012). Second, practice; the multiplication and nature of reforms requiring implementation, and heads’ personal responsibility for these, threatened reform delivery (Thomson and Sanders, 2009). Partly to mitigate this problem, the National College—‘the delivery arm of the DfES’ (Thrupp, 2005: 18)—promoted distributed leadership, or ‘hybridised delegation, [which] enabled a totalising reform strategy where all could be responsible and accountable for standards’ (Gunter, 2012: 2). Whatever the accompanying adjective, the discourse has emphasised leadership, with its inflation of heads’ agency through the vision they are exhorted (DfE, 2014c) or even required (Ofsted, 2012b) to have, often reinforced by (functionalist) research (e.g. Chapman and Harris, 2004). Nonetheless, the actual work of headship has reflected more the dominance of the business-derived New Public Management (NPM), which, through the disciplinary technology of managerialism, enables through organisational hierarchising the efficient implementation of extrinsically provenanced policies, whose measurability and auditability NPM in turn shapes (Hall, 2013). Few leaders’ visions, for instance, contradict significantly the state’s policy agenda (Wright, 2001).

The picture, then, is of a de-professionalised profession conditioned by New Labour to evangelise the reform agenda, but actually performing a range of
responses from compliant (e.g. Courtney, 2013) to subversive (MacBeath, 2008). The structural diversification implemented by the Coalition since 2010 and likely to continue under the Conservative government elected in 2015 has opened up new spaces, literally and metaphorically, for these school leaders. Coldron and his colleagues (2014), for instance, suggest that some are exploiting the differential status accorded to the leadership of new school types to assert a dominant position relative to leaders of de-privileged types.

### 2.7. Summary of chapter two

In this chapter, I have provided the context for this study through discussing in relation to key literatures and events the overarching ideological landscape, the way in which extant diversity has been superseded by purposive diversification, some indicative exemplars of this policy agenda, and finally how school leadership inter-relates to this phenomenon. In the following section, I shall move from contextualising to conducting the present research through setting out and discussing my research design.
Chapter three: Research design

3.1. Introduction

The research reported in this thesis aims to explore and locate contemporary education provision in England in its socio-historical and ideological context. It does so particularly but not solely through the accounts of nine school leaders concerning their professional biographies and articulation of leadership. These speak to the phenomenon, but do so in ways which require problematisation, since they are located within the matrix of power relations that this critical set of analyses seeks to open up to scrutiny. So, to achieve the project’s aim of examining the ‘deep micro-structures of the social and cultural practices that mediate macro power structures and individual consciousness’ (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 43) in relation to an atomised system and its leadership, this qualitative research adopts a critical policy scholarship approach. This research takes seriously Silverman’s (2013) reminder that ‘it is thoroughly mistaken to assume that the sole topic for qualitative research is “people”’ (p. 38), and so documents are understood as equally valid and useful sources of discursive knowledge as interview data. To make sense of the data, I draw on Bourdieuan thinking tools through which issues of identity construction, positioning of the self and others, and the reproduction of inequality through the system of provision are illuminated and theorised. The use of these tools enables understanding both of subjectivities and structures. The purpose of this chapter is to describe, explain and justify my use of the approach employed here, the epistemological and methodological framework underpinning it and the accompanying methods and theoretical tools. I shall also describe the process of conducting the study and discuss the issues raised by the research design concerning ethics and trustworthiness.

3.2. A critical policy scholarship approach to epistemology and methodology

The aim of this study is to examine educational leadership as a structured structure, in other words, both as a construct which is produced by historical, political, sociological and ideological conditions, all of which feature in the analysis, and also as a construct which influences others’ agency, identities and space for
social practice. It is consequently qualitative in taking as its starting point a variation on the notion that ‘the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated’ (Cohen et al, 2007: 19). I differ from Cohen et al. in their privileging of subjects’ ‘standpoints’ as the sole way of understanding this world. So, whilst this research is concerned with interpreting the social world ‘by reference to the actor’s motives, intentions or purposes’ (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 88), its purposes extend beyond the interpretive objective of illuminating subjectivities and providing Verstehen explanations whereby ‘the basic conceptual schemes which structure the ways in which the actions, experiences and ways of life of those whom the social scientist observes are made intelligible’ (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 90). Such a paradigm is susceptible to producing research concerned with instrumental issues of effectiveness, and which exemplifies what Grace (1995: 2) calls ‘policy science’. What is lacking from interpretivist and policy-science methodologies is the explicit use of theories of power to show how:

… all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable... (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994: 139–140)

In making explicit that I share these beliefs, I am claiming a critical epistemology and, moreover, a critical methodology, since these assumptions constitute a theory which informs my area of focus, the way I have conceptualised the “problem”, the tools I use to investigate it and the approach I use (Kamler and Thomson, 2014). For simplicity, I use the term critical in this thesis to incorporate what is called elsewhere (Gunter et al., 2013) a socially critical approach, by which I mean not only that I take into account wider ideological and structural conditions in thinking about and theorising the interplay between policy, power and actors’ agency, but that one of the purposes of this research is to work towards the transformation of these power relations such that conditions improve
for those presently subordinated through them. Here, I am following Apple’s (2013) schema for critical researchers whereby transformational purposes may be achieved through, for instance, illuminating instances where educational structures, cultures and practices produce inequality, engaging in critical analysis and revealing spaces for action. This analysis seeks through these means therefore to illuminate and disrupt the dominant hegemonic discourses identified.

The approach I take here to achieve this, following Grace (1995), is one of policy scholarship. Grace (1995) contrasts policy scholarship with policy science in the following way:

Policy scholarship resists the tendency of policy science to abstract problems from their relational settings by insisting the problem can only understood in the complexity of those relations. In particular, it represents a view that a socio-historical approach to research can illuminate the cultural and ideological struggles in which schooling is located. (Grace, 1995: 3)

I argue that the diversification of educational provision in England illuminates the contemporary struggle over what is taught; by whom; to whom; in what structures; and with what, or whose purposes. These questions are deeply ideological (Apple, 1989); neither can their answers in the present context, reified as school structures, be understood without engaging with history. It is for these reasons that I locate this study in the policy scholarship research tradition, where it follows and contributes to a significant field of policy studies (e.g. Ball et al., 2012; Eacott, 2011; Exley, 2009; Fitz et al., 1993; Gewirtz, 2002; Grace, 1995; Gunter et al., 2014; Gunter, 2012; Higham, 2014a, b; McGinity, 2014; Reay et al., 2008; Rogers, 2012; Thomson, 2008; Walford, 2000).

3.3. The research questions

The project has a wide focus with outcomes including an intellectual, historical and ideological mapping of state-funded schooling provision as well as contributions concerning school leaders’ identities and practices and also the structures which contribute to their production. The first research question therefore is:
1) In what ways, why and with what effects has state-funded schooling provision become so recently structurally and competitively diverse and dynamic?

The rationale behind this question is to enable mapping of the terrain of provision which is both context for and focus of this study. What requires investigation is the way in which it appears that neoliberal-informed policies are prompting the creation of new types of school at ever-increasing rates, and yet also how a strong neoconservative discourse seems to be constructing a curricular canon which is in tension with this atomising tendency. No detailed, scholarly mapping exists of this education provision and to provide such would constitute in itself a useful contribution to the field. Scholarly analyses of structural reform tend instead to focus on a single aspect in order to illuminate ideological, sociological and/or political features of the entire provision (Edwards et al., 1992; Fitz et al., 1993; Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Walford, 2014; West and Bailey, 2013).

2) How is leadership in this newly diverse terrain conceptualised and articulated through policy and by headteachers and principals, and with what effects?

This project aims to contribute to a field where understanding of educational leadership is enhanced through recording and theorising its development, particularly but not wholly through its embodiment as habitus in headteachers’ and principals’ subjectivities (e.g. Gewirtz, 2002; Grace, 1995; Gunter, 2012; Smyth, 1989) — the wording of research question two enables sources other than leaders’ own accounts to be used. Research question two permits the state of educational leadership as a field to be evaluated; what that means for headteachers and principals engaged in practices constructed as leading (or being led); and also how that speaks to wider structures and ideologies in education.

3) How is the relationship conceptualised and articulated between school type and leadership, and with what effects?

Research question three relates the structural work undertaken for research question one to headteachers’ and principals’ subjectivities and practices, and also to the discourses influencing these. I want to investigate not just the “nuts-and-bolts” of how differing conditions and freedoms concerning staff pay and organisational autonomy are playing out in headteachers’ and principals’ roles,
but also how the wider discourses enabling school-type differentiation and hierarchisation are understood by these actors; how far they are willing to go in playing the game and what that means for provision and those involved in it. In this question, school type is understood as an instantiation and operationalisation of system diversity, competition and flux: it is a single, but necessary expression of an ostensibly neoliberalised landscape of provision. Looking at this landscape through this lens allows me to generate productive insights into what McGinity (2014: 28) has formulated as the ‘neoliberal policy complex’.

Taken together, these questions permit significant empirical contributions to the field in the areas of education, structural reform, educational leadership, policy studies and to theorising within these. To explain how I shall achieve this last element, I turn now to a discussion of the theoretical tools I use in the study.

3.4. Thinking with Bourdieu

As Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) argue, in critical research ‘[e]mpirical analysis needs to be interrogated in order to uncover the contradictions and negations embodied in any objective description’ (p. 144). Thinking tools are required for this task of interrogation, as well as to achieve the critical researcher’s further objective of illuminating power relations and their effects. A number of this study’s features make this more pressing. First, it deals with leaders, and their espoused approaches to leading and leadership, where questions of power are explicit yet whose conceptualisation in normative functionalist texts concerning, for example, distributed leadership (Harris, 2013) — these being reproduced in school-leader talk — disguises the way it is being enacted. Second, the study addresses the relationship between a marketised system of provision and the way actors engage with what is constructed through the market as a value-neutral mechanism for arranging people into provision (Connell, 2013). What is needed, then, are theoretical tools which enable both the problematisation of normative theories of power and the illumination of processes of power in spaces where their presence is occluded.

In order to pursue these goals, I have drawn extensively on Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1998) to conceptualise this study. Having set out above the need for these tools, in section 3.6.5. I discuss how I used them in analysing my data and in chapter ten I state how I make a
contribution to knowledge that develops Bourdieu’s work, both by concretising it within the newly expanded landscape of provision in England and theoretically, through developing conceptualisations of hysteresis and cross-field effects. Here then, I shall adumbrate briefly the principal conceptual tools that Bourdieu provides and which I use in this study, and the theoretical framework that together these tools constitute.

Social space may be understood as consisting in more-or-less autonomous and delimited fields, such as those of business, educational leadership (Thomson, 2005) or education policy (McGinity, 2014). Actors in the field have a stake, or illusio, in playing the game dictated by the field according to its rules, which are inculcated in them through their habitus such that the rules and the consequences of the playing feel natural, or doxic. In fact, the game consists of struggling through enacting symbolic violence for resources or advantage — capital. There are no winners and losers, for the game never ends (Thomson, 2014), but there are moments of winning and losing; actors misrecognise both instances as well as their very involvement in the game as doxic. Bourdieu posited that capital takes four forms: economic, cultural, social and symbolic, these being exchangeable at a rate determined by the most proficient players of the game. The game is further influenced through the habitus — ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures’ (Bourdieu, 1990c: 53) whereby resources for future action are embodied through historical precedents and deployed in combination with a consideration of current circumstances. Its grounding in material conditions produces effects of differentiation and hierarchisation at the level of a social class as well as an individual:

The practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, because, as Leibniz again says, ‘following only (his) own laws’, each ‘nonetheless agrees with the other’. The habitus is precisely this immanent law, lex insita, inscribed in bodies by identical histories… (Bourdieu, 1990c: 59)

Social practice is produced through the dialectic between habitus and field; the ‘almost miraculous encounter’ (p. 66) between these two, between what Bourdieu calls ‘incorporated history and objectified history … makes possible the near-perfect anticipation of the future inscribed in all the concrete configurations on the pitch or board’ (p. 66). Where field conditions change or are changed such
that this alignment shifts, the resulting dislocation between habitus and field Bourdieu calls **hysteresis** (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Deploying these tools in this study enables me to contribute to and build on scholarship where it is argued that educational leadership is a field which is losing its autonomy owing to encroachment from the economic field (Thomson, 2005). In this corporatised field of educational leadership, the rules of the game mandate authoritarian practices, but these are misrecognised as leadership and sanctioned through policy.

So far in chapter three, I have set out the epistemology underpinning this research project and detailed how these have fed through into the production of a methodology, my research questions and contributed to my selection of theoretical tools to carry out the intellectual work of understanding how power interplays with the phenomena under investigation. In the following section, I set out my research design, my choice of methods, and also the limitations of those methods, and discuss how my epistemological position has contributed to these.

### 3.5. Study design

The study consists of two strands. The first seeks to address research question one and consequently involves an intellectual mapping of education provision in England. To achieve this, I draw on a range of primary and secondary data sources, including for the former, ministers’ speeches and Acts of Parliament, and for the latter, scholars’ interpretations of these. The precise method employed here is set out in detail below in section 3.6.1.

The second strand of the research employs two methods: interviews (both narrative and semi-structured) and the use of documents. The mapping from strand one was used to inform the selection of a range of school types whose features speak to this project. The narrative and semi-structured interviews with the headteachers or principals of these nine schools contribute to answering research questions two and three. The group is not intended to, and cannot represent the terrain in any statistical sense. The schools were selected in order to cover the range of types as comprehensively as is feasible within the material constraints of a PhD project. I provide more details about the sampling process in section 3.6.2. and a comprehensive account in Appendix A. Each headteacher or
principal was interviewed three times for around one hour per interview. The interviews were staged over an 18-month period, with the first round taking place from April to June 2013, with most interviews taking place in May. The second round took place in December 2013 and the final round in June 2014. There were two reasons for this staging. The first was to capture any flux in the roles or responsibilities of the participants, or any changes in the status of their school. That the present policy context is a fast-moving one is an assumption of the research and is reflected in its title. The second reason is that I intended having a different focus for each interview round. In the first, I elicited through narrative enquiry the participants’ biographies; in the second, I wanted to know what it was like to lead their type of school, and in the third, I aimed to find out how they understood their practice in the overall landscape of provision.

This project, as a critical endeavour, is concerned not only with headteachers’ and principals’ subjectivities but also with how these relate to and reveal wider discourses of power and ideologies. As Dey (1993: 36) argues, ‘meaning cannot be reduced to a personal matter ... subjects perceive and define situations, including their own intentions, according to their understanding of their own motivations, and of the contexts in which they act’. Therefore, to mitigate this, a further element to this second research strand comprises the use of documents. More details about the process undertaken in this regard are provided in section 3.6.4.

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<th>R.Q. 1</th>
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*Table 2. Mapping chapters against research questions*

It has been a central concern with this as any doctoral project to ensure that the foci of the constituent chapters address the research questions. Table 2 demonstrates how the questions and the chapters map against each other and illustrates the rationale behind the ordering of the chapters. As far as possible, there is a steady, linear shift in focus from research question one to three as well
as from the structural to the personal. So, I have structured the thesis so that the discussion moves from a systemic perspective to how headteachers’ and principals’ practices and identities relate to that structure and finally to how their biographies might speak to these practices. In other words, throughout the thesis, the focus “zooms in” progressively with each chapter.

At the risk of over-simplifying a process which was characterised by a degree of productive recursion, re-thinking and continual honing, the following schema represents broadly the overall pattern of research activities:

1. Engage in reading and researching for the purpose of mapping the field of provision (see 3.6.1.).
2. Represent and record the result of this in a number of ways as described in section 3.6.1. (this stage continuing until around February 2015 and involving continual re-analysis of documents).
3. Generate data through interview and transcribe.
4. Simultaneously to #3, start exploring Bourdieu’s thinking tools.
5. Conduct preliminary analysis through thematic coding after each round.
6. (In rounds two and three) Consider the relationship of these data to those from previous rounds.
7. From the coded data, develop an emergent focus for an output in relation to research questions, critical perspective and theoretical framework, drawing on and re-interrogating knowledge from documents acquired through #1.
8. Develop this focus into an argument, or set of related arguments through writing. (This stage requires repeated re-visiting of theoretical tools and their application in the literature, as well as of the data.)
9. Where appropriate or necessary, select and analyse critically supplementary documents relating to that critical, theorised focus/argument and to the coded data.
10. Finalise output — this process comprising a crucial stage in the analytical process (Richardson, 2001).
In this section, I have described and discussed the research design employed in this study. In the next section, I shall discuss the methods I use to generate and analyse the data in the context of their use.

3.6. Conducting the project

3.6.1. Mapping education provision

This strand of the research project had four objectives. The first was to provide a quantification of the number of school types. This involved engaging with the fundamental question of what constitutes a type as opposed to, for example, a characteristic (this is discussed at some length in chapter four and so is not anticipated here). The second was to conceptualise this terrain so that the provision is located in its historical, political and ideological context. This is to ensure that the research strand reflects the critical perspective of the whole project and can serve as the intellectual foundation for the discussion chapters that follow. Third, the resulting typologies had to inform the selection of a sample for interview. Finally, the result had to be conceptualised and written as a discrete, publishable article under 8,000 words with a substantive contribution to knowledge and a structure and argument which invite reading. I addressed these objectives through documentary analysis, defined by Fitzgerald (2012: 298) as ‘a form of interpretative research that requires researchers to collect, collate and analyse empirical data in order to produce a theoretical account that either describes, interprets or explains what has occurred’. I shall structure the following methodological discussion around the four objectives.

The first objective was to locate and record all extant school types through identifying and selecting documents relating to such (see Appendix G for a list of the documents used for this stage). I focused initially on legal types and, following Fitzgerald’s (2012: 298) to be ‘systematic’, my method for constructing the proto-typology consisted in first, performing literature searches for key words (e.g. “foundation schools”; “trust schools”; “voluntary-aided (schools)”) in databases including the University library, Scopus, and Google Scholar. I set up alerts in those databases; followed specific leads by referring to key legislation; and tracked themes through reference lists in published work. In this way, I uncovered many primary sources, including ministers’ speeches, Acts of Parliament, White Papers, and other policy texts, and also built a large collection
of secondary sources consisting largely of scholars’ interpretations in the literature. The process often led from secondary to primary sources: a scholar would refer to a policy or Act of Parliament which I would then locate. It was clear when this work was completed because no new documents were suggested or appeared, though the scholarly work of historical and ideological contextualisation continued. In this way, the preliminary typologies shown in Appendix B and then Appendix C were constructed, this latter to address the way in which many school types, e.g. comprehensive and faith, are invisible through a solely legal lens.

I then developed a schema to guide my critical framing of the data:

1. **To whom is the organisation accountable?** Who has a **duty** to intervene should concerns arise?; **what is the obligation of the sponsor here?**

2. **Who ‘line manages’ the organisation?** This is different to the above; in an academy chain, the sponsoring charitable trust will perform this function, but the question motivating question one is one of statutory duty rather than management structure.

3. **Who owns the organisation’s assets?** Buildings and land. What does this mean in terms of what can be built and/or done there? Who decides/cannot decide?

4. **What sort of pupils is the organisation for?** Distinguished by age? Ability? In what? Locality? Faith? If selective, who controls that? What are the limitations of this power?

5. **What is taught here?** Which subjects/ knowledge is privileged in status or time allocation? What does that say about the organisation’s purposes and history?

6. **Why does this type of organisation exist?** What ‘problem’ was it intended to solve? What historical phenomenon does it represent? What is its position now within the sedimentary layers of school types? Dynamic? Moribund? Resurgent? Re-invented? Vestigial? Who thinks so? What is the evidence base for all this?

7. **Who works here?** How is what they earn decided? What rights do they have? Which do they not have? Why? Which qualifications do they need?

8. **What is this organisation responsible for?** Standards within one establishment? Across a nexus? Initial teacher education? CPD? Leadership development? Systemic improvement?

9. **What networks does this organisation comprise/ work within?** Federation / academy chain / teaching school alliance? Why is it in this
network? What is its position within this/these networks? How does it contribute? What does it get from the network?

10. **How is the organisation governed?** What is the formal governance structure? Who is represented? Who is not? What does this (lack of) representation say about the organisation’s purposes and remit?

11. **How is the organisation funded?** Directly from the state? Supported by a sponsor? Some other stakeholder? What does this mean for accountability? Purpose? Practice? Identity?

12. **What is the organisation’s relationship with its community?** How is this evidenced or operationalised? How is ‘community’ defined? How has this changed as the school has developed?

13. **Who decides what gets done in this organisation?** This will be influenced by the answers to other questions in this list, including those on governance, networks, accountability point and ownership of assets.

Some of these questions were not immediately answerable through the sources that I was using in those initial stages, but some were, and so I entered these in the rows of a table which would become Appendix B. Additionally, I started to write at this point about both the process of constructing a typology and my interpretation of the history of the field. This became a full unpublished paper, which I presented at seminars (e.g. Courtney, 2013b) and used in my teaching. I then presented a proto-typology of the entire terrain at an international conference (Courtney, 2014a). Feedback from all sources, as well as my continuing research following the above methods, informed future versions.

Early in 2013, I addressed the third objective concerning the typology: identifying a sample of participants for interview. I shall discuss this in more detail in the section below, 3.6.2. and in Appendix A. Insofar as it relates to the evolving mapping, however, I want to note here that by this stage, my research into school types had become more historical and political rather than strictly typological. However, the process of arriving at criteria whereby schools could be differentiated in order to select one over another in a transparent way prompted a further round of typological development. So, for instance, where previously I had understood chains with an Executive Head, or CEO, as one category, the sampling process led me to think that a chain with a business-derived executive in charge was analytically distinct from one with a current or former headteacher. This distinction is reflected in the iteration of the mapping presented in chapter four.
The production of chapter four constitutes the final methodological stage in the mapping, since as Richardson (2001) argues, writing itself is "a method of enquiry" (p. 35). It represents a single version of the learning I have done and the various maps and typologies I have produced over these three years, a version which necessarily has to fulfil objectives of clarity, structure and originality more than of comprehensiveness. It is here that I paid particular attention to questions I had developed much earlier to guide the mapping so that it spoke to critical concerns:

1. What does this type mean for and/or reveal about the organisation’s relationship with:
   a. The state
   b. Democratic processes (and by extension, the people)
   c. Ideological orthodoxies?

2. Whose interests are being promoted? To what purposes? Whose are ignored in so doing?

3. What discursive assumptions are embedded in this type’s actualisation, waxing and/or waning?

In this section, I have described and discussed the methodological process whereby the intellectual mapping of the field of provision was undertaken and represented. Next, I shall summarise how the sample for interview was selected; for a comprehensive account of this, see Appendix A.

3.6.2. Sampling

I located my participants through purposive sampling, since the process involved first identifying characteristics pertaining to the school type and sometimes subsequently as a filter, the leader, and then approaching those having such characteristics in a given geographical area (Cohen et al., 2007). By February 2013, the mapping work undertaken to produce the preliminary typologies in appendices B and C suggested a number of school types which spoke to the research questions. These were: federation; community comprehensive; academy converter; sponsored academy in a chain; teaching school; free school; studio school; University Technical College (UTC); Pupil Referral Unit (PRU); special school; and faith school. The comprehensive was of interest because it represented the discursive base-line from which the contemporary proliferation of
new types had sprung. Where these new types are constructed as innovative and entrepreneurial (McGinity, 2015), comprehensives and their leadership are discursively marginalised (Ball, 1990). Other types, e.g. PRUs and special schools, were of interest because they are under-represented in extant literature on education provision as a landscape (although there is a body of literature addressing special needs and how it is addressed structurally in a neoliberalised context where children attending such schools do not “add value” in the way the market requires, e.g. Bines (1995)). Faith schools required representation in the sample because they are amongst the oldest types and have succeeded in re-inventing themselves structurally several times. So, their voluntary status has survived numerous re-organisations and they have benefited from the creation of new types such as trust schools, foundation schools, sponsored academies and free schools. This persistence, simultaneously despite and thanks to structural reform, is a phenomenon which requires investigation. Finally, a fourth tranche comprises school types which embody the “new wave”. Most are based legally on academies: these are the UTC, studio school, free school and academies. Two exemplify a different policy strand; the “system-leading” school and its leader, in this sample “represented” (in a non-statistical sense) by the teaching school and the federation.

Locating the study in one large urban area comprising a number of LAs, I mapped all the secondary schools in this area and a range of their characteristics onto a spreadsheet. These characteristics were those that were readily identifiable from two key databases; Edubase (DfE, 2013) and Ofsted, and included admissions policy, age range, number on roll, Ofsted rating, name (and therefore often the sex) of the leader, popularity (through over-/under-subscribed status), location, type, trust status and religious character. These characteristics were often out of date or incorrect, and required further investigation through the school’s website. All the schools in each category of interest were identified, and then a number of filters applied to obtain three potential participants who were approached one at a time, the second being approached in the case of the first’s refusal to participate. The filters were different in each case, since some desired characteristics of the overall sample (e.g. gender non-bias) were able to be fulfilled only as more participants confirmed, and so the final places left to be filled took account of such criteria in ways that the first ones did not. Where all three in a category declined, the entire group was re-filtered, again taking into account criteria which
had become newly relevant. In this way, some categories were merged because the school whose leader agreed to take part combined some of these features. So, for instance, the special school and the federation category were both covered in Les’ special federation. The final sample is shown in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>School Type — pupils aged 11–16 unless stated otherwise</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Academy converter: selective grammar. 11–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazel</td>
<td>Community comprehensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>University Technical College. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Voluntary-aided Catholic school. Teaching-school. 11–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Federation of LA-maintained, cross-phase special schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod</td>
<td>Studio school. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Free school: parent-led, comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Sponsored academy in a chain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. The sample.*

Three of the group were nearing retirement: Hazel, Bridget and Rod. The three principals of newly built, or refurbished academy-type schools — Will, Paul and Jane — were in their late thirties or early forties and this was their first substantive headship. One headteacher, Ellen, was Black. She, like Les and Phil, was in her mid-fifties and this was not her first headship.

Next, I shall discuss my selection and use of narrative and semi-structured interviews to generate data with these participants.

**3.6.3. The interviews**

The principal source of data for this study is in-depth interviews, since, as Morris (2015: 5) observes, this method ‘gives the researcher access to interviewees’ thoughts, reflections, motives, experiences, memories, understandings, interpretations and perceptions of the topic under consideration’, as well as ‘the opportunity to establish why people construct the world in particular ways and think the way they do’. This last point is of particular interest to me as a critical scholar, where the focus is on relating the subjectivities revealed through interview to wider discourses of power (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994).
The interviews took place at each headteacher’s or principal’s school (except Jane in our final meeting whom I interviewed at the University owing to her resignation since the second interview), and all were audio-recorded. They were staged over three rounds, each with a different focus. The first of these foci was leaders’ career biographies, since key objectives of this study are developing an understanding of who is leading, how they came to be doing their job and how they understand themselves as leaders. These objectives may be fulfilled through career or life-history narrative interview, whereas interview rounds two, which focused on interrogating the leaders’ understanding of the activities and roles constructed as leadership; and three, which explored participants’ views of the policy context within which these occur, call rather for semi-structured interviews.

In configuring the interview encounter over these three stages in this way and with these purposes, I drew on the approach proposed by Seidman (2006). Through this method, some of the limitations of both life-history narrative and semi-structured interviewing are somewhat mitigated, e.g. the tendency of the former to lack the precise alignment to a research focus and perhaps to represent ‘a purposeful account ... to please the interviewer’ (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 65), and of the latter to neglect grounding the data in their socio-historical and embodied context.

Narratives are ‘an elementary form of human communication’ (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 58) and ‘the linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). Through narratives, actors bring meaning to the events they experience, fashioning them post hoc into ‘thematically unified goal-directed processes’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). In this way, they ascribe ‘place, time, motivation and the actor’s symbolic system of orientations’ (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 58): more simply, and as Bruner (1990) argues, they sense-make through plot. Here, through leaders’ drawing on discursive and cultural resources to plot what they see as the significant events of their lives, I seek to realise my aim of understanding ‘the tension between what might be called the cultural legacy, the weight of collective tradition and expectation, and the individual’s unique history and capacity for interpretation and action’ (Goodson, 2001: 132). This method of life or career-history narrative interviewing has many precedents in education studies (e.g. Evetts, 1994; Goodson, 2014; Pepper and Giles, 2015; Rayner and Ribbins, 1999), although differing strategies are proposed for conducting them. Over Jovchelovitch and
Bauer’s (2000) schema of distinct phases and rules, I preferred Goodson and Sikes’ (2001) model, where a semi-structured schedule is permitted and flexibility is crucial. I consequently created an interview schedule (see Appendix D) in order to guide participants’ responses where there was a pause in the account or a prompt was needed.

Following the approach recommended across the literatures (e.g. Floyd, 2012; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995), I opened the interview with a general question inviting a story, ‘tell me how you came to be the headteacher (or principal) of this school’. The participants were able to interpret this as they wished; all except two started their narrative from their childhood, and those two started from their university days. Whilst I had a number of prompts ready (see Appendix D), in fact, nearly all the leaders touched on most of the substantive areas unprompted and generated a large amount of rich data.

The remaining two stages comprised semi-structured interviews, since participants had been selected on the basis of their unique perspective on school-type diversification, and so I was keen to use a method which enabled them to contribute what was distinctive about them and their experiences, but to locate these contributions within a unitary frame of reference (Cohen et al., 2007; Coleman, 2012). All the same, round two particularly required bespoke interview schedules within the overarching theme of how you lead this particular type of school (see Appendix D). These were created to take account of the structural heterogeneity of their respective schools, but also of their responses in the last round of interviews. On no occasion did I ask participants each question on the schedule in the order given: it indicated themes and angles to be covered as and when the participant responded in a way which suggested it might be apt.

Despite the differing focus of each round, some of the participants had anticipated and spoken about that of the third by the time of the final interview, and so for these (e.g. Ellen, Les and Phil), I encountered what Coleman (2012) amongst others has called data saturation, where little new was added. However, for others (perhaps not co-incidentally clustered in academy-type schools), the flux indicated in the present study’s title was being lived — the UTC headed up by Will had been taken over by whom I have called Eckersley Trust and Jane had resigned from the sponsored academy where she was principal. The focus of the
third interview for these was consequently rather more on what had happened to
them and what they made of it.

The recorded data were transcribed and sent back to the participants for checking.

### 3.6.4. Using documents

The second strand of the research employed documents in addition to the
interviews.

The purpose of employing documents was to identify the discourses being
reproduced by and reflected through policy in order to contribute insights
concerning the state of the fields of education, education policy and education
provision, and through this to *supplement* the findings from the interview data
and enable me 'to read between the lines of official discourse' (Fitzgerald, 2012:
297). To have relied only on the accounts of school leaders throughout would
inevitably have produced an understanding of these wider phenomena filtered
through the lens of contemporary school leadership.

There is an important methodological distinction to be made between my use of
interviews and documents in this stage of the research. This difference is that the
data generated from the interviews were analysed in relation to the research
project as a whole, whereas the documents were selected and used only in
relation to the creation of specific outputs arising from that holistic analysis and
which would come to form the discussion chapters/outputs, whose writing
therefore constituted the final stage in the process of analysis. The coded and
themed interview data consequently drove the overall analysis, with documentary
data supplementing those codes and themes to position them and the research
participants in relation to wider discourses of power. So, the extent and manner
of my usage of documents depended on the chapter/article’s purpose. I have
addressed the methods employed for the mapping article in chapter four
discretely, therefore the following applies only to chapters five to nine, where I
use interview data.

In all the chapters except chapter five, I use documentary data to provide context
for the subsequent analysis which foregrounds my interpretation of leaders’
subjective understanding of who they are and what they do. Consequently, the
documents are used to anchor the analysis in the literature and in the concepts
being explored, and so appear only in the sections preceding the findings. In
chapter five, the documents form part of the analysis itself because the question posed through the paper concerns issues exceeding the subjectivities of headteachers and principals; e.g. the way children are conceptualised in policy (as well as by heads and principals); the way that provision is hierarchised; and the way policy creates the discursive conditions whereby children are to be sorted, or sort themselves into that provision. These purposes cannot be achieved through relying solely on the accounts of leaders, and so the development of the argument relies on the incorporation of a range of texts.

In the first sort of usage referred to above, policy documents are used in the first half of the paper alongside researchers’ contributions to the themes to be explored with the purpose of grounding the analysis in both discourse and scholarship. Some of the purposes intended for the documents correspond to those common to all literature reviews, for example, tracking intellectual and/or political developments and ‘demonstrating where the current study fits into the scheme of things’ (Berg and Lune, 2012: 398). Correspondingly, in order to first locate these materials at the beginning of the study when I was reading widely in relation to the mapping paper, I conducted key-word searches, located important players (e.g. academy trusts) and explored their websites and the documents therein through assiduous desktop searching and the following-up of leads in the way described by Ball (2012a) in his policy-network analysis of global education. Much documentary material was therefore catalogued in my Mendeley library before starting to write, and my having read it doubtless contributed to the formation of the chapter foci and their arguments, and allowed me to draw on this material in the same way as scholarly contributions. In Corporatised leadership of English schools (chapter seven), there are two instances of this. The first is where I reference the websites of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust and the Studio Schools Trust. These are online texts which I had already catalogued and here referenced to support the argument I was developing concerning the characteristics of UTCs and studio schools. Similarly, in the second example, I referenced an online document from the DfE which I had located two years previously and which is updated regularly with the number of academies open or opening.

A second way in which documentary data were located to support the developing argument in the literature review is exemplified in Get off my bus! (chapter eight). Here, as above, I had identified a focus for the article based on the interview data.
One phrase which was repeated several times by my participants concerning their leadership was ‘relentless’, especially in relation to their visions. Having recently completed a research project on Ofsted and school leadership (Courtney, 2013a, 2014c), the collocation was familiar to me, and so I was able to search for it in my Mendeley library and locate the Ofsted framework documents which were already there, and incorporate these into the exposition in the literature review.

To locate more material, I conducted a further search on that key phrase and on variations of “(leader’s) vision” on a website I knew would contain such normative texts, i.e. the National College. I thereby identified a further document which was typical of the majority of those in that location which I catalogued and drew on to make my argument in that section.

I turn now to discuss how I located, selected and used documents in chapter five. This may be summarised as a combination of the two methods above; what is distinctive is that I located and cited these documents in the analysis as well rather than solely in the literature review. In both cases, though, the purpose was the same: to support my argument.

Chapter five was the last to be written, although through it, I developed an idea I had presented at a seminar (Courtney, 2014d). This argument and structure derived from the data and from having read widely into selection, UTCs and studio schools over two years, and locating and cataloguing numerous relevant documents. In terms of assessing what was relevant, those documents on the UTC or studio school websites addressing questions of ownership, selection (or “fit”), pupil characteristics, curriculum and distinctiveness proved to be discursively rich. These initial sources were sufficient to persuade me that the analysis was valid and useful; what was missing became clear in the writing, when I broke the argument down into its constituent parts and assessed the strength of the documentary and/or interview data I had amassed so far in supporting each part. I then returned to the websites of the two trusts concerned to look specifically for documents speaking to that element of the argument. This is quite distinct from looking for an extract which supported my argument, which I did not do and, through constituting ‘distorting findings’ (BERA, 2011: 10), would be unethical. Simply locating what the trusts had produced on the substantive area was sufficient. An example of this is the extract in chapter five from the Baker Dearing Educational Trust starting, ‘UTCs offer a very particular
curriculum ...’ . This extract is entirely typical of all of their texts on the curriculum they offer.

In summary, my use of documents may be conceptualised in two ways. First, as one sort of binary where the differentiating criterion is where I employ the documents in the paper. These may be either solely in the literature review or throughout the entire chapter, and forming an integral part of the analysis. Second is an alternative binary where the differentiating criteria are the timing and purpose of their location. In most cases, documents had been located in the early months of the project as part of the mapping project and associated reading and were subsequently drawn on to support arguments which had been fomenting since then. In other, rather fewer cases, the documents were sought post hoc from specific locations relating directly to the theme of the chapter in order to support an argument whose overall structure was sound, but which required more documentary evidence in order to enhance its credibility and robustness. There is a circularity to this approach: I started this project by engaging with many documents which I interrogated from a critical perspective. I then carried out the interviews, the data from which, in combination with this document and theory-informed understanding, suggested several arguments which had the potential to become chapters/articles. Finally, in writing the chapters, I returned to the documents where necessary to hone the arguments and ensure they were well supported. Uniting all the conceptualisations above is the way in which the analyses are grounded in the interview data and supported through the documents. I now address more fully the way in which I conducted my data analysis.

**3.6.5. Data analysis**

Perhaps reflecting its non-discreteness as a stage in the research process, allusions to data analysis have appeared throughout this chapter. I want here to draw together these activities and discuss how the data analysis fitted into the overall structure of the research project, how I analysed the data from the interviews and the documents and how I developed my analysis using Bourdieuan tools. I will first address how I analysed the interview data.

These data, as discussed in section 3.6.3., were elicited through a narrative approach in the first round and a semi-structured interview approach in the other two. This latter produced nonetheless a number of storied responses in the way
anticipated by, for example, Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000). Polkinghorne (1995) identifies two approaches to dealing with narrative data: *narrative analysis* and *analysis of narratives, or paradigmatic analysis*. For Polkinghorne, in narrative analysis, ‘the researcher’s task is to configure the data elements into a story that unites and gives meaning to the data as contributors to a goal or purpose’ (p. 15), whereas paradigmatic analysis ‘seeks to locate common themes or conceptual manifestations among the stories collected as data’ (p. 12). In common with previous policy scholarships (e.g. Rogers, 2012), I have employed both approaches.

I used narrative analysis to investigate the relationship between headteachers’ and principals’ biographies and how they understood their professional practice and subjectivities. Many of the participants’ accounts were rendered as narratives; the process of analysis was consequently one of re-organising the data into ‘a coherent developmental account’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 15). In this way, I could address the project’s purpose of understanding how headteachers and principals, whose careers had progressed through a time of relatively little structural diversity, had perhaps come to be leading new types of school or to see their leadership of maintained schools increasingly constructed as a problem. I extracted the key elements of the participants’ backgrounds and lives, changed certain details to protect their anonymity whilst retaining the spirit of the original, and arranged them into what I called, following Pepper and Giles (2015: 47), a ‘crafted narrative account’. I also included elements from the participants’ accounts which exemplified their stance towards the state of play in education currently, which made explicit the relationship between biography and attitude — this causal link had nevertheless been established by the participants themselves. This initial analytical stage was then supplemented with a theorised analysis of what these narratives mean for who is leading; how they lead; how they understand that leadership and what all this means for the field. I made use of these narrative analyses in chapters nine and six in this thesis and elsewhere (Courtney, 2014a; Gunter and Courtney, forthcoming). In chapter six, the narrative required very little re-organising or editing. Uniquely in this thesis, narrative analysis in that chapter was used alongside paradigmatic approaches.

The second method, that of paradigmatic analysis, was by far the more common way in which I analysed the interview data. Through this, I aimed to go from the particular to the categorical and then to identify the relationships between those
categories (Polkinghorne, 1995) — these tasks are central to qualitative analysis (Dey, 1993). Below, I explain and exemplify my method for doing so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher disposal</td>
<td>Disrupting teacher identities</td>
<td>‘The predecessor school staff thought that the school was a good school. It wasn’t. So the first thing was to present to them, actually, this is where the school is at, and this is where ‘good’ is. And there’s a massive gap between the two’. (Jane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘There is expectations that they teach in a certain way, and that’s explained in the documentation. And they have an ethos and a vision for education that’s explained in the documentation’. (Paul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firing staff</td>
<td>I think that there's going to be a lot of challenges in terms of competencies and redundancies’. (Bridget)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘It’s all about the type of people, the right people and chucking out what wasn’t needed and getting in what was … (Phil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-structuring</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘But if you’re not, then you’re off the bus’. And that’s either through redundancy, through a restructure, through a change in roles, through a capability …’. (Jane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I’ve done now three re-structures, I’m about to do my fourth’. (Jane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I’m just going through the re-structure where I’ve got people who’ve lost their jobs’. (Ellen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporat-ised leadership</td>
<td>Commodifying leader knowledge</td>
<td>‘I’m probably the oldest head now in the diocese … and I think that there’s a certain wisdom that comes with that, and I think that’s something that often, younger people want to buy into’. (Bridget)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using private-sector providers</td>
<td>‘We’ve bought that online package, and that seems to be working with some of our students’. (Ellen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘[The sponsors] have also paid for professional coach for me … it’s been brilliant’. (Jane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘we’ve engaged with a third-party company to deliver a couple of nice new level-three qualifications … And also working with a very interesting chap who’s basically a serial entrepreneur’. (Paul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need for corporate governors</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘You don’t want to be tripped up because you’ve fallen foul of company law’. (Phil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘We try to make sure we have people with a legal, and a financial and an HR background as well’. (Hazel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘If we don’t have that level of involvement we’ll end up being an education establishment that thinks it operates like a business, rather than an education establishment that is being driven and directed by business’. (Will)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualising education as a business</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘So for me, that’s why I probably want to become an alternative provider and … expand, I can do the work that I want to do’. (Ellen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘There's a reality of new start-ups. It's lonely and it's hard work’. (Will)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4. Examples of themes, codes and extracts in data analysis*
First, for each round of interviewing, I transcribed the new data — this constituting in itself an analytical process where I started to think about meanings and patterns. Then, I read the transcripts several times, immersing myself in the data in the manner recommended by, *inter alia*, Braun and Clarke (2006). Through this, and building on my recollections of conducting the interviews, I identified seven or eight initial codes. Some of these were what Braun and Clarke (2006) term ‘semantic content’ (p. 84) codes, e.g. *reasons for becoming a teacher*, and *early life*. Others corresponded to Braun and Clarke’s ‘latent content’ (p. 84) codes, e.g. *creation/disruption of teachers’ identities*. I opened each transcript consecutively alongside a new Word document, and copied and pasted extracts from each into this document under the code I had developed. As the number of codes (as well as the number of extracts in each) increased, I identified sub-codes and/or re-conceptualised the entire code.

Next, I mapped the resulting codes in a variety of ways until I had identified themes which spoke to the research questions and were strong enough to produce one or more publishable arguments. In Table 4, I provide some examples of these themes, codes and extracts. The first extract in Table 4 (Jane) under the code ‘re-structuring’ exemplifies how extracts may be coded in multiple ways, since this also fit within the code above, ‘firing staff’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract</th>
<th>Memo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phil: ‘Anyway, I went, found a council house in, a council flat, started working there, in a really quite challenging school. A challenging school with a progressive Headteacher. The city at that time, you know, it was a very socialist and progressive hotbed of innovation really. But the schools were just, just quite tough. So there was no uniform, no bell, no bells, people were all doing various project schemes’.</td>
<td>First job starts. Challenging urban school. Progressive Headteacher. Progressive city council. Collocation of ‘very socialist’ and ‘progressive hotbed of innovation’. Contrast ‘socialist and progressive’ with ‘tough schools’ via the ‘but’. It implies two strata; an idealistic, political one and a hard, chaotic school-level reality characterised by (structural) lack. See, e.g. repetition of ‘no’; ‘no uniform, no bell, no bells’. Lack of organised curriculum: ‘people were all doing various project schemes’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane: ‘But when people talk about welfare, they need to look at people like me, because that support has got me where I am now, and if I hadn't had that support, that family support, financial support, the structures that a local authority can provide, then I wouldn't be doing this job now. So there's a lot of people who have contributed to where I am now and it isn’t just hard work on my part, you know. I've been allowed to get here’.</td>
<td>It is ironic that she acknowledges so plainly the debt she owes to LAs in supporting her rise whilst a) leading a sponsored academy and b) deriding the quality of local authorities and their officers so roundly elsewhere in these data. She is hugely ambivalent about LAs. Cf the earlier section where she describes the innovative practice in an LA school, but then later ascribes innovativeness solely to academies in justifying her departure from the maintained sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5. Examples of data extracts with attached memos*
Simultaneously, I was interpreting my participants’ data from a critical perspective, and so I developed a system whereby I attached memos in comments boxes to the utterances which provoked them. These memos positioned these utterances in relation to questions of power, to previously stated data or others’ data, and to the literature and/or theoretical tools. The tools I drew on here were often linguistic, with the unit of analysis at word level, although through these tools and my critical perspective I was attempting to ‘read between the lines’ (Fitzgerald, 2012: 297) in order to answer sociological, not linguistic questions. Table 5 shows some examples of the outcomes of this process (with some details redacted or altered to retain anonymity). Often, it was the thinking undertaken in the memo-writing that produced the idea, or contributed to the critical angle for a chapter. That was the case with chapters seven, eight and nine.

The methodological tools that I brought to bear in the memo-writing I applied also in analysing documents. The method comprised engaging critically with the text, and was achieved through paying attention to theme; lexis; the relationship between words; assumptions; metaphors; and effect — all these to be considered as far as possible in relation to questions of power, structure and agency. In this regard, the approach drew on elements of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003). By this point, rather than writing memos, I was applying my critical understanding directly to my writing, and through the process of re-drafting was engaged in honing and sometimes re-thinking my analysis in the manner noted by Richardson (2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘[Teachers must grow accustomed to] working in multi-disciplinary teams which include people from different backgrounds and with different skills, appreciating that the teacher is not the “top professional” in the UTC’. (Mitchell, n.d.: 8)</td>
<td>Industrialists are more valued than teachers, reflecting that industry is more valued than teaching. In multi-disciplinary teams, business interests will win. Industrial skills are what innovate schools like UTCs should be teaching. By extension, whatever is currently taught in mainstream schools is not fit for (economic) purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There is a positive, work-like atmosphere in this school. Expectations are high and teachers work hard to ensure students achieve well. One parent told inspectors “each morning my son doesn’t say he’s going to school, he says he’s going to work”’. (Ofsted, in Studio Schools Trust, n.d.: n.p)</td>
<td>The atmosphere in schools should resemble that in places of employment. This speaks to the larger issue of how schools should be preparing pupils for work efficiently. The more a school resembles work, the better. That it is Ofsted saying this is discursively important, given the influence this body has on practice and cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exemplifying this, in Table 6, I present an textual extract from chapter five and the accompanying interpretation. Additionally, the very selection of the text constituted part of the process of documentary analysis; see sections 3.6.1. and 3.6.4. Here, I follow O’Reilly and Kiyimba (2015) in suggesting that my epistemological and critical assumptions are just as important as my choice of analytical tool and that my methods and axiology are tightly coupled.

I want finally in this section to draw explicit attention to my use of Bourdieuan conceptual tools in constructing an analysis of the data. During the process described above whereby I coded the data, selected documents and critically interpreted these, I had simultaneously been reading widely Bourdieu’s work (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1998); scholars’ explanations of this body and its use in and to education studies (Grenfell, 2010; Hardy, 2014; James, 2011, 2015; Jenkins, 1992; Lingard, Rawolle, and Taylor, 2005; Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2014); examples where Bourdieuan thinking tools have illuminated understanding (e.g. Gunter, 2012; McDonough and Polzer, 2012; McGinity, 2014; Rawolle, Wilkinson, and Hardy, 2010; Rawolle, 2005; Reay, 1997; Thomson, 2005, 2010 amongst many) and challenges to the usefulness or validity of these tools (e.g. Jenkins, 1992; King, 2000). This meant that as I was growing more familiar with my data and as the critical foci were emerging, I was also moving gradually from understanding the tools Bourdieu and others have employed to being able to see how certain of them might provide essential conceptual and explanatory power to the phenomena I was investigating and the arguments I was developing through the outputs. Where this was not the case, and keen not to use the tools merely habitually (Reay, 2004) or superficially (James, 2015), I refrained. For example, in chapter six, I aim to explain Bridget and Will’s stories partly through the concept of symbolic violence: Phil’s story in the same chapter is not illuminated in the same way through this application, and so I do not attempt it. A more striking example is my preferring Arendtian to Bourdieuan tools to conceptualise chapter eight. It would have been possible to provide a sufficient analysis through symbolic violence, but the data was replete with talk of getting rid of people, which to me called for stronger tools even at the expense of conceptual coherence across this thesis.

The data have consistently driven the selection of tool, though as McGinity (2014) points out, the way in which one interprets the data is already strongly informed by the theoretical paradigm within which one is working. In this way, the process
has been recursive and iterative. The metaphor of a toolkit to describe Bourdieu’s concepts has been useful: I have felt able to select those whose features have spoken sufficiently to the developing argument or focus to warrant further investigation and possible deployment. In Table 7, I set out some examples of the initial correspondences between focus and tool and the way that helped to develop my critical argument.

Table 7 shows how I do not expect thinking with a Bourdieuan tool to be in and of itself sufficient to carry an argument: there is always a ‘so what?’ which in this thesis is responded to through examining the phenomenon illuminated by such tools simultaneously through a critical lens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My interpretation of the phenomenon</th>
<th>Conceptual tool suggested</th>
<th>Impact on power relations /equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heads’ and principals’ accounts and policy reveal a discourse of self-selection, where children are expected to choose educational provision which is hierarchically and substantively inferior.</td>
<td><strong>Habitus operating at a class level:</strong> ‘To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or tastes) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition …’ (Bourdieu, 1998: 7-8).</td>
<td>Inequality is being reproduced but with the blame placed on seemingly rational actors choosing their subordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads’ and principals’ biographies support the suggestion that the preferred model of the independent state school newly privileges those leaders with a background in or disposition to favour private-school education, its culture, discursive assumptions and methods, and de-privileges “welfarist” leaders.</td>
<td><strong>Hysteresis</strong>, where: ‘the relative values of symbolic capitals are altered and the interactions between field structures and habitus are dislocated’ (Hardy, 2014: 138).</td>
<td>The state is intervening to change the subjectivities of leaders in ways which suit their interests and those of capital.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Examples of interpretation, selection of tool and critical argument

### 3.7. Trustworthiness

This section addresses first the ways in which I have sought to create a trustworthy study, and second, issues of generalisability. This thesis is located within the qualitative paradigm, whose heterogeneity prompts a ‘need to acknowledge this formally in the quality criteria used to judge each study’ (O’Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015: 38). Its social constructionist epistemological foundation makes notions such as reliability conceptually irrelevant, and so here,
and in response to O’Reilly and Kiyimba’s (2015) call, I draw on a range of indicators of quality to highlight the ways in which I have endeavoured to conduct a trustworthy study within the parameters I have established for it.

1. Congruence of epistemology, ontology, axiology, methodology and methods of data generation and analysis are fundamental to the quality of qualitative research (O’Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015). I have been explicit about how this research is critical, and how the epistemological and ontological assumptions this presupposes have informed all aspects of the project. These include my selection of topic, my research questions and, as I have shown in the sections above, the way I have generated and analysed data.

2. Since my being in the data is unavoidably an important element of the social constructionist position, I have reflexively recounted in the introduction to this thesis who I am and why this matters to this project. In other words, I have been honest and transparent concerning the relationship between project and researcher axiology.

3. To enhance the verifiability of the claims I make here, I use verbatim quotes from the participants as much as possible.

4. These claims fit within and speak to the extant critical literature, contributing to their credibility.

5. I have used multiple methods, of interview (comprising two approaches) and documentary analysis to inform the findings.

6. I have provided a clear account of how the research was conducted, with examples of data coding, interpretation and theorisation, and including an extended account in Appendix A of how I located and recruited my sample.

Like all qualitative studies, I do not claim statistical generalisability from my findings. Through the careful selection of participants, however, and robust attention to the trustworthiness of these findings, I am able to claim representational generalisability, where I am confident that the findings are representative of the phenomenon under investigation here (O’Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015). With Bourdieu in mind, I have attempted here to locate this study in:
...the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a “special case of what is possible”, as Bachelard puts it, that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations. (Bourdieu, 1998: 2)

The data are sufficiently rich and the analyses sufficiently detailed to permit a degree of transferability (Rogers, 2012); this is dependent upon the extent to which aspects of this study speak to other scholars such that they take up, for instance, the tools used, the findings reached or the methods employed.

3.8. Research integrity

Critical research raises particular ethical issues owing to the axiological position of the researcher in relation to (and which is often in tension with) her or his participants. I have experienced, been troubled by and written about a similar ethical disjuncture previously when researching essentially-defining subjects from a queer perspective (Courtney, 2014b), and so I have been thinking about the sometimes complicated relationship between the researcher and researched for a number of years even before this present project started. First, however, I will start with the less ambiguous ethical elements of this study.

This project was given approval by the University’s research ethics committee. All participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet with details of the project and what they would be expected to do, and each signed a consent form (blank copies of these are in Appendix E). The project did not change between ethical approval and its completion. I promised participants that I would keep their data confidential and that I would do my utmost to protect their anonymity.

Where the ethical ambiguity lay was in my relationship as a critical researcher to the knowledge the participants were producing, and therefore by extension to the participants themselves. Underpinning critical research is the notion that it is emancipatory, that its goals include not just the exposure of inequitable power structures but actors’ deliverance from them. Exactly who these actors are is contested. For Habermas, it is the participants in the research who are to be liberated (in Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). I conceived this study rather with Apple’s (2013) answer to this problem in mind. Here, through a range of critical activities ranging from acting as ‘critical secretary’ (p. 43) and getting involved in the action to using critical analyses, the possibility of emancipation is available
potentially to a wider audience than in Habermas’ vision, not necessarily or solely to the research participants. This seemed insignificant when designing the study, but became so during the research when, for instance, Phil invoked genetics to justify the exclusion of working-class children from his selective school. That is the most striking example of several where my position as a social-science researcher was challenged through being in receipt of narratives that generated for me a degree of cognitive and axiological dissonance.

In thinking through these issues, I found Ozga and Gewirtz’s (1994) contribution helpful, where in describing a similar dilemma they locate the ethical focus of enquiry away from a narrow focus on the participants to encompass broader societal ethical objectives, namely:

1. Does the research draw attention to and challenge the assumptions informing policy and expose the inequitable effects of those policies, especially on particular groups?

2. Does the research explain how injustices and inequalities are produced, reproduced and sustained?

3. Does it provide a basis for the development of strategies of social transformation?
   (Adapted from Ozga and Gewirtz, 1994: 123)

Adopting this ethical position mitigates rather than resolves this tension, but has proved useful in enabling me to carry out the project.

3.9. Constructing the thesis

In this section, I shall explain how I moved from data sets comprising storied and/or coded and themed interview data to a series of six outputs which form the chapters and which are encompassing of the project. I shall do this by adumbrating the history of each chapter through key dates and events. I will do this in the order of their writing (this differing from the order in which they appear in this thesis).
3.9.1. Mapping school types in England (chapter four)

Details concerning the transition from research to output for this paper are provided in section 3.6.1. I will re-state here that this paper in particular has progressed through different iterations as conference papers (e.g. Courtney, 2014a) and seminar papers (e.g. Courtney, 2013b) and has been shaped by those experiences and the feedback provided. For example, the centrality of the curriculum in differentiating school types became much sharper as a result of conversations following such presentations. I submitted in May 2015 to *Oxford Review of Education*, selecting it for its track record in publishing high-quality papers concerning structural reform and its context (e.g. Crook, 2002; Exley, 2009). Beyond that, the content of the paper has not been influenced significantly as a result of its site of publication. Following two rounds of minor revisions, where the paper was shortened each time and the use of the metaphor of *faulting* and *folding* expanded, it was accepted in September 2015. The paper is currently in press. I have not yet amended the proofs, and so this is not the version of record.

3.9.2. Get off my bus! (chapter eight)

I identified the themes of teacher disposability and totalitarian leadership from the interview data immediately following the first round of interviews in mid-2013. I wrote an abstract in December 2013 for the BELMAS conference the following July. I wrote a full paper for the conference and then Helen Gunter and I developed it for publication over the following months. I contributed the data, the central analysis concerning the role of vision and the particular construction of leadership through that, and Helen Gunter contributed the Arendtian theoretical framework. We selected the *International Journal of Leadership in Education* because of its track record in publishing critical work (e.g. Hall et al., 2013) and its acceptance of longer articles. Following one set of minor revisions where we made more explicit mention of the role of ideology and the lack of extant literature on this phenomenon, the paper was published in January 2015. This output contributes to the reporting of the research project a detailed examination of some of the practices arising from a corporatised educational leadership field and how that may be understood. This thesis contains the version of record.
3.9.3. Corporatised leadership in English schools (chapter seven)

I responded to a call for chapters in August 2014 for a special issue of Journal of Educational Administration and History on ‘Consultants, brokers, experts’: knowledge actors and knowledge exchange/flow in educational administration. The call asked for contributions concerning new, private-sector knowledge actors in education, which spoke to the major theme of corporatisation I had identified in the interview data, and whose historical contextualisation I believed needed more attention (following the contributions on a related theme in the previously written chapter). I would have ensured that this theme was represented in the final thesis because it featured so heavily in the participants’ accounts. My paper was shaped by the call in the way it brought to the fore how actors from business were operating as (chairs of) governors in sponsored academies, including UTCs, and were having on occasions considerable influence over what was constructed as leadership there. I submitted the paper in January 2015, and following one set of minor revisions (consisting largely in editing the paper down to under 8,000 words) it was published in May 2015. This is the version of record.

3.9.4. The courtier’s empire (chapter six)

I was invited to contribute a chapter to the forthcoming edited collection by Gunter, Hall and Apple titled Corporate elites and the reform of education. I had just returned from my final round of interviewing, where a number of headteachers and principals had independently raised the activities of Brian Sykes at Eckersley Trust and the impact of these activities upon their own positioning within the educational leadership field. The invitation prompted me to interpret what was happening using the notion of elites as a lens through which Brian Sykes’ influence on my participants’ agency and positioning might be usefully theorised. In this way, the structure and argument of the chapter was considerably and helpfully influenced by the terms of the invitation. Despite that, had the invitation not come, I would still have written a chapter addressing the way in which my participants are required to take positions in relation to others’ superior playing of the game, since that theme was the most significant one I identified in that round of interviewing. This focus is intended to contribute to the reporting of the whole research project the ways in which those constructed as leaders may be constrained or structured, the previously written chapters emphasising their agency. The draft chapter has been submitted to the editors.
3.9.5. Corporatising school leadership through hysteresis (chapter nine)

The focus for this output, the penultimate to be written, arose directly from the data and the research questions with no reference to publication calls. It reflected my wish to theorise the corporatisation I was seeing in a way which spoke to participants’ identities and biographies, complementing the theorisation in chapter seven of corporatised practices within the education field. Chapter nine has an important structural function to fulfil in the thesis by framing these wider themes through a focus on the micro, or the individual. The output, which is not under submission, develops arguments made by Coldron et al. (2014) in Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, but will speak to the readership of a journal which aims primarily to advance knowledge in and using theory through employing sociological tools.

3.9.6. Examining the policy and discursive conditions for pupil self-selection into hierarchised provision (chapter five)

The idea for this output came through researching provision in order to map this terrain for research question one. What was required for the reporting of the research project was a forensic examination of the hierarchisation of school provision and the discourses relating to that. This was to be revealed using data from heads’ and principals’ accounts as well as the primary and secondary sources used for chapter four in order to link the structural with the discursive elements of the project. The focus in chapter five was not developed in response to any call for papers or to fit into any journal in particular, although it will clearly resonate most with readers and editors of policy-oriented education journals. I presented the outline of the argument at a seminar during Policy Week for policy@manchester (Courtney, 2014d) and wrote the full paper in early summer 2015; the last of the discussion chapters. It was revised following feedback from my supervisory team and will, like chapter nine, be submitted following the viva to take account of examiners’ feedback.
3.10. Summary of chapter three

In this chapter, I have set out my research design and shown how there is congruence between my social constructionist epistemology, my critical policy scholarship methodology, my selection of research questions, my choice of interview and documentary analysis as methods and my interpretation of the data. I have described and explained why and how I have used Bourdieuan conceptual tools to help me explain and interpret the data, complementing the critical perspective I have brought to bear. I have set out in detail the sampling procedure I have used to locate and recruit my participants and explained in detail the ways in which I have analysed my data. Next, I have engaged in a discussion of the study’s trustworthiness and its ethical implications. Finally, I have set out how I took the data sets and developed the outputs that formed the chapters.

The next chapter is the first of six discussion chapters, written as publications either as journal articles or as a chapter in an edited collection. Following these six, I draw together the findings in chapter ten.
Chapter four: Mapping school types in England

Status: In press.
DOI: Pending.

Abstract

The number and range of school types in England is increasing rapidly in response to a neoliberal policy agenda aiming to expand choice of provision as a mechanism for raising educational standards. In this paper, I seek to undertake a mapping of these school types in order to describe and explain what is happening. I capture this busy terrain from different perspectives: legal status; curricular specialism; pupil selection; types of academy; and school groupings. The mapping highlights the intersections between the current reform agenda and the historical diversity within the English school system to show the dialogue between past and present. Borrowing the geological metaphors of faulting and folding, I argue that long-established school types are not buried under sedimentary layers of reform, but are thrust into the present where they are discursively re-imagined through neoliberalism. Finally, I conceptualise the landscape holistically through the lenses of locus of legitimacy and branding, where I argue that current structural diversification policies enable the enactment of interests other than educational through transferring responsibility for education and related assets away from public and towards corporatised or religious actors and institutions.

Key words: Neoliberalism; school choice; school types; structural reform; mapping; typologies.

Introduction

Attempts to map English education provision are often at best incomplete (see e.g. DfE, 2012b; Eurydice Unit, 2007; New Schools Network, 2015). Woods and Simkins (2014: 332) identify two reasons for this: ‘any attempt to categorize the types of school groups that are emerging is fraught with difficulty and needs to be constantly revisited as new patterns of provision emerge’. This paper
nevertheless seeks to address this gap by contributing to the field a quantification and conceptualisation of school types in England. This is an important task for two reasons. First, it has been a truism of Conservative, Labour and Coalition policy that school-type diversity, following market ideology, would improve the system. This has produced a thirty-year period of diversification, internationally unparalleled, which merits thorough investigation. Second, the neoliberal discourse prompting this diversification underpins much reform internationally; England is consequently an important case study.

This mapping reflects successive ideological influences on the present ‘messy, patchy and diverse’ (Ball, 2013: 10) terrain in England, so speaks to how national systems are a product of local legacies as well as globalised trends. First, mass industrialisation promoted the creation of a public, state-funded school system from a patchwork of dame (see Higginson, 1974), faith and other charitable schools (Mortimore, 2013). This emergent system, requiring workers for hierarchised functions within the economy, sorted and prepared children for those roles through selection, predominantly into grammar or secondary-modern schools and a linked curriculum. Haydn (2004) and Crook (2002) describe how concerns from the 1940s regarding equity, social mobility and the reliability of testing arrangements increasingly politicised the system — and not simply from the centre — enabling local authority (LA)-led comprehensivism; this peaked in the late 1960s and 1970s without ever eradicating selection. However, the discursive associations of this “common schooling” with fairness shifted to derisory depictions of “bog-standard” comprehensives as the economy faltered and policy-makers’ confidence in the capacity of any polity to respond waned. This enabled neoliberalism, where private-sector actors (or others constructing their identities or practising in corporatised ways) set up schools outside a local state system constructed as failing. Extant schools may also leave that system, often to join chains or federations. The school type finally developed from faltering starts to fulfil these cultural, structural and legal ambitions of corporatised autonomy is the academy, launched in 2000. However, the needs of the economy, once more constructed as paramount, are again producing differentiation and hierarchisation; the legal framework of the academy, especially since 2010, has proved sufficiently flexible to enable this type to become the template for a range of sub-types. These include studio schools, free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTCs). Their autonomy is often more
discursively than empirically meaningful (Salokangas and Chapman, 2014), yet academies do have statutory freedoms concerning *inter alia* the national curriculum, pupil admissions, and staff’s pay, conditions and qualifications. These freedoms are governed by contract law; each contract is between an academy trust, following a business model, and the Department for Education. Fragmentation is more than simply a consequence of multiple school types appearing: dyadic contractual arrangements mean it is increasingly difficult for any Secretary of State to effect national change (Wolfe, 2013). There is no longer a school “system” in England; instead, there exist ‘increasingly fragmented local landscapes of schooling with different patterns emerging in different parts of the country’ (Simkins, 2014: 4).

I make two contributions through this research; first, in bringing a new methodology to bear in capturing and illuminating this busy and rapidly evolving landscape from a range of different perspectives. Through surveilling the terrain from multiple standpoints, I make visible features of the landscape otherwise hidden. This includes the residue of public provision and welfarism, and the emergence of privatised and corporatised provision. My second contribution is my contestation that despite this fragmentation, a consistent discourse is being reproduced concerning a shift from civic welfarism to domination by an ‘uneasy coexistence’ (Carvalho and Rodrigues, 2006: 340) of neoliberalism and neoconservativism and to pupils’ construction as fixed, knowable markets.

This mapping reports on the first stage of a wider study into school leadership in neoliberal times. Over 400 primary and secondary sources were used to construct and/or inform the typologies. Examples of the former include policy texts, ministers’ speeches, White Papers, Acts of Parliament, materials from non-departmental public bodies (NDBPs) such as the National College, Ofsted, and websites belonging to Academy Trusts and sponsors; secondary sources include scholars’ interpretations of these; and legal and education blogs. The documents were located initially through key-word searches of databases, archival material and legislation, and subsequently through following up references. The purposes were to understand the history of public schooling in England; the diversity that has always existed in the system; the development of specific policies of diversification and their political and ideological significance and context; and the rise and sometimes decline of individual school types and their place within this phenomenon of diversification. Not all labels attachable to a school feature here
as types, revealing in the method of documentary analysis a process of selection, rejection and rationalisation. Its guiding principles were whether identifying a differentiating characteristic as typologically significant illuminated the terrain; what the historical precedents were for claiming typological status; and the strength of any claims for such. To mitigate subjectivity in assessing these, I wrote up and presented a proto-typology at seminars and conferences (Courtney, 2014) and engaged with feedback to develop the approach reported here.

**On types and typologies**

A school type, for the purpose of this paper, is a categorisation which is culturally, ideologically, historically, organisationally or legally meaningful. Types may be classified in typologies to compare and illuminate their characteristics. Gunter and Ribbins (2003) identify two sorts; “tight”, with stable, mutually exclusive and exhaustive characteristics, and “loose”, which are simply classificatory systems without those features. Schools are categorised and hierarchically differentiated in policy, and so conceptualising the English educational landscape through school types is theoretically productive and ideologically illuminative. The typologies produced here comprise both “tight” and “loose” varieties, principally owing to the variety of types’ discursive origins, the sedimentary layering of and change in their discursive meanings over time, and the manifestation of these altered meanings in the present through semantic *folding* and *faulting*.

To produce a typology is to locate oneself in the field, privilege certain knowledge and ways of knowing, and make inevitably partial knowledge claims (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003). Following this, Bruce and Yearley (2006: 207) insist that ‘typologies are never true or false; they are merely more or less useful. That value lies in how well they perform the dual tasks of succinctly describing and making sense of reality ...’ . Types may draw on numerous discourses including legal, ideological and marketing: an academy bears meanings in all three. Faith schools are not a legal category, but are widely understood as a type with ideological and branding significance. This multiple derivation of legitimacy precludes mutual exclusivity where types derive their sense from different discourses; a faith school must, for instance, simultaneously be an academy or one of the types of maintained school. Furthermore, one type may have meanings in different discourses which are distinct and even dynamically divergent. For
instance, “free school” invokes cultural meanings distinct from its legal definition; these do not necessarily develop in tandem. At the level of any single discourse, however, types may not just be mutually exclusive, but mutually constitutive through abjection; a selective grammar school, for instance, creates a corresponding secondary modern (even where it is not so named). Even "comprehensives" necessitate special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). So, whilst intra-discursive school typologies may be “tight”, inter-discursive ones must be “loose”.

Another reason for typologising loosely, building on Newman’s (2007) sedimentary metaphor, is historical, discursive faulting and folding. As new political and ideological impetuses produce new forms of schooling, older forms often survive de-privileged and discursively marginalised, resulting in an education “system” resembling rock strata. Fresh layers overlay without obliterating older ones, whose meaning is nevertheless altered under their discursive pressure. Were the process simply sedimentary, types created under former conditions might be semantically altered by this new layer, but, still buried, would be unremarked. I extend the geological metaphor to incorporate faults and folds to explain how these altered types live too in the present; thrust upwards to the surface in a dynamic process of ideological reinterpretation. For instance, academies as originally conceived under the New Labour government after 2000 were designed predominantly to replace poorly performing urban secondary comprehensives (Adonis, 2012). The academy “type” therefore often invoked a failed, urban predecessor school and a new “turn-around”, or “super” headteacher. In 2010, the Coalition government repositioned academies through prioritising the conversion of existing, high-attaining schools. Previous semantic collocations concerning the history, intake, location and prior attainment of schools categorised as academies were removed, and the label now relates primarily to freedom from statutory regulations which all academies share. Yet those original academies still exist; relegated to a sub-set of the type their characteristics once defined wholly. Once, it was possible to doubt academies’ success; now, the semantic boundary change means they are almost successful by definition (Academies Commission, 2013); the original “city” academies may benefit from this discursive association even as it marginalises their particular needs, histories and trajectories.
So, school types may be discrete or over-lapping, and a single type may diverge semantically along different discourses, especially over time. What this means for this paper is that any simple declaration of what any type means must be regarded as being necessarily susceptible to historical partiality (by not asking, for example, when this meaning has not applied) and reductionism (by not asking, for example, for whom and in which discourses this meaning never signified).

**Mapping school types in England**

In this section, I map state-school types through a series of tables, typologies and narrative accompaniment to contextualise and explain school-type diversification. The perspectives through which this terrain is described are legal status; curricular specialism; and pupil selection. I next explore the different forms of what has become the template for most new types; academies. Then, I typologise the multi-school types which are burgeoning in a marketised landscape privileging acquisitions and mergers. Finally, I draw these elements together by discussing education provision holistically through the lenses of *locus of legitimation* and *branding*.

**Types by legal status**

*Legal status* is a necessary but insufficient way of categorising school types, invoking an illusory objectivity, immutability and precision. A typology based solely on legal status, for instance, simultaneously over-homogenises and over-differentiates academies. Table 1 shows how it does the former in conflating free schools, studio schools and UTCs (Academies Act 2010), which are organisationally and discursively meaningful types. Conversely, it may over-differentiate; since each academy’s obligations are contained in its funding agreement whose particulars it alone may possess. Whilst problematic, legal status is nonetheless essential in typologising because it sets differentiated parameters for areas such as the curriculum, governance, employment policy, pupil selection and employees’ pay and conditions, which are organisationally and educationally consequential.

Table 1 shows that there are around 11 legal school types, although voluntary aided and controlled might easily count as distinct, and little distinguishes a City College from an academy, the two co-existing through *faulting and folding*. Some
types, whilst having a legal status, are defined primarily instead in terms of the categories above.

For instance, maintained grammar schools are understood primarily as community, foundation or voluntary schools. This is part of a phenomenon whereby selection and sorting — central to English schooling provision — are rendered invisible, or at least harder to see, in a strictly legal typology. This includes the right of admissions officers in certain faith schools to select according to religious criteria as well as the all-ability admissions of comprehensive schools. Legal status muffles these tendencies, concealing comprehensivism behind euphemistic terms such as community, or scattering faith schooling across several categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Legal sub-type(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Not applicable (n/a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community special</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>With a foundation (also known as Trust schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority governance trust (where the instrument of governance specifies that most governors are foundation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority governance trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without a foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation special</td>
<td>With a foundation (also known as Trust schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority governance trust (as above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority governance trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without a foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary (vast majority have a religious character)</td>
<td>Voluntary-aided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary-controlled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained nursery</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation</td>
<td>See table 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>Legally, the alternative provision (AP) academy is a distinct sub-type. The legal entity here is the academy trust, which may provide the education promised in its funding agreement across multiple sites (Wolfe, 2013). The school has no distinct legal identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City College</td>
<td>City Technology College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City College for the Technology of the Arts (One extant).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure accommodation</td>
<td>Known as secure children’s homes and LA-maintained. Secure training centres are different, being privately run for profit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. School types by legal status*
**Types by curricular specialism**

The creation or development of schools offering a distinctive curriculum and seeking to attract pupils showing an aptitude for such, reflects a long-standing tendency in English schooling and has undergone numerous reincarnations which may usefully be conceptualised together. This tendency is partly a response to perceived shortcomings in the products of English educational provision relative to the needs of the global economy, hence the weighting towards science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Nonetheless, also evident is a strong theme of curricular diversity for the sake of school differentiation alone, particularly in New Labour’s development of specialist schools from 1997–2010. The extent to which the presence of a curricular specialism necessarily constructs a concomitant new school type varies: the appearance of UTCs and studio schools makes this once again a tight coupling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Sub-type(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City College</td>
<td>City Technology College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City College for the Technology of the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist school (Legal status: any)</td>
<td>Thousands of specialism combinations possible. Also meaningful to divide into specialist schools and high-performing specialist schools, which were permitted two or more specialisms. Officially historical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio school (Legal status: academy)</td>
<td>As with the UTC below, various specialisms available. These are broadly vocational and all studio schools follow the same work-skills development curriculum; CREATE (Studio Schools Trust, 2013, 2014). English, maths and science GCSEs also taught as core; most students will leave with level-two qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career College</td>
<td>Located in existing FE colleges, but accept children from age 14. Competitors to studio schools, which have similar objectives and markets but are operated by a different trust. No sub-types; career colleges may specialise ‘in a vocational area relevant to the local labour market’ (Career Colleges Trust, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Technical College (Legal status: academy)</td>
<td>Focus on technical education, offering a range of specialisms e.g. engineering and health sciences (Baker Dearing Educational Trust, 2015). Beyond a wider curricular offer (E-bacc subjects are taught as core), students are expected to leave with mostly level-three qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. School types by curricular specialism*
This is purposive and derives not just from these schools’ distinctive curriculum, but also from their association with an overarching academy trust (the Studio Schools Trust, the Career Colleges trust and the Baker Dearing Educational Trust for UTCs — these two latter chaired by Lord Baker) franchising an espoused coherent vision, with ‘a clear, nationally recognised brand with an identity of excellence’ (Career Colleges Trust, 2015: np). These trusts, whilst not sponsors, have succeeded where Oasis and E-Act have not, and achieved school-type status for their brand. Much of this is related to their curricular offer (see Table 2).

The creation of new school types on the legal template of the academy has been central to the development of this dimension of school differentiation, since academies are not obliged to follow the national curriculum. This neoliberal curricular diversification is in tension with the neoconservative imperative of what Ball (2013: 19) calls a simultaneously promulgated ‘cultural restorationism’ of the Conservative-led Coalition government (2010–2015) whereby a curriculum deemed canonical is enforced through performance measures: here, the E-Baccalaureate suite of subjects comprising English, maths, science, a humanities subject and a modern foreign language. This is accompanied by the de-valuing for performance-measure purposes of numerous vocational qualifications. Academy-based types’ curriculum must be sufficiently distinctive for their innovations to be rewarded in the market and sufficiently similar to other schools’ to maintain league-table position and deliver those subjects constructed through a dissonant neoconservative policy strand as constitutive of a “good education” and which delivers into contemporary provision through faulting and folding a logic of the past. The vehicle for their offer, distinctive or otherwise, is branding, the market (and the dismantling of the local authority) dictating that these brands apply to chains, and now types.

**Types by pupil selection**

Table 3 shows how selection against several dimensions of difference persists, England’s ‘half-hearted comprehensive education experiment’ (Ball, 2008: 186) notwithstanding. The form most influencing state provision in England, albeit indirectly, is selection by ability to pay. In England, around 7% of children in are taught in independent, fee-paying schools. The high correlation between wealth and educational outcomes means that those 7% in 2013 took 39.4% of Cambridge and 42.8% of Oxford places (HESA, 2015).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection method</th>
<th>School type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By age</strong></td>
<td>Nursery (age 2 or 3–5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infant (5–7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First (4–8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior (7–11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary (5–11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle (8–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary (11 or 12–16 or 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All-through (3, 4 or 5–16 or 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By sex</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-educational (mixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By faith</strong></td>
<td>Academies with a religious character (may select up to 50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust schools, where religious, may reserve up to 100% places for children of the faith if over-subscribed. If under-subscribed, they must admit anyone applying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary schools (as trust schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By ability</strong></td>
<td>Maintained grammars (legally, these are either community; VA; VC or foundation schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary moderns (never called such, they nonetheless exist wherever there is a nearby grammar school).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive schools (admitting pupils of all abilities constitutes a selection policy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special schools: for pupils with learning and physical disabilities and impairments. Sub-types include foundation and community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By aptitude</strong></td>
<td>Any school with a curricular specialism may select pupils with an aptitude for that area $^1$ for up to 10% of its places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTCs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Studio schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Colleges, especially the remaining City College for the Technology of the Arts: the Brit School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Many, though not all pupils placed here after demonstrating “insufficient aptitude for mainstream schooling”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP academy. As above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By aptitude for boarding: state boarding schools. Interviews permitted, uniquely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By ability to pay</strong></td>
<td>State boarding schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^1$ This applies only to specialisms in sport; the performing or visual arts; modern foreign languages; design and technology and information technology (DfE, 2014a).

*Table 3. School types by pupil selection*
This influences profoundly state-funded provision, where covert or overt selection and processes of self-segregation are normalised, even in comprehensive schools (see Coldron, Cripps, and Shipton, 2010). Other selection methods are so long-standing (e.g. by age) as to appear axiomatic and are virtually invisible as a selection device. Nonetheless, this is perhaps the most persistent way of categorising schools in England, with origins in the industrial revolution (Robinson, 2010).

Whilst comprehensivism has been subject to ‘discourses of derision’ (Ball, 1990: 22), constructed to symbolise “the problem” with contemporary education provision (see Adonis, 2012), its counterpart-through-abjection, selection, has not become entirely acceptable either. This ‘nasty little theory that not all children have it in them to think like a few are able to think’ (Dorling, 2013: np) persists nonetheless in policy and discourse; conceptually underpinning and reproducing selection. It has, until recently, been obliged to disguise itself behind the language of aptitude, or deny itself completely. Exemplifying this is the Studio School Trust’s answer to whether its schools are selective in its website’s FAQs: ‘No ... They are ... aimed at students who are better suited to a more ‘hands on' approach to learning. However it should be noted that, as academies, they do have the option to select 10% of their students by reference to a specific aptitude’ (Studio Schools Trust, 2011: np).

This appeal to self-selection is rather risky for the entrepreneurial franchisee, or potential career college leader, who is promised by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (Career Colleges Trust, 2015: np) ‘motivated and enthusiastic students – via a standardised selection process’.

So, following a period where selection was obscured through the sedimentary over-laying of comprehensivism, faulting and folding have pushed it back to the surface in multiple new forms.

**Types of academy**

So far, I have presented three different perspectives of the same landscape, though none captures it entirely. In the next two sections, I move on to explore in more detail newer forms of provision. First, I typologise the varieties arising from academies, whose legal framework has provided the template for a Cambrian explosion of new school types. These have tended to exploit their
statutory freedoms in recognisably clustered ways owing to a neoconservative valorisation of certain forms of knowledge, e.g. STEM, often under the aegis of a unifying brand identity and making typologising a necessary task. However, it brings a particular set of challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Sub-type(s) 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored academy</td>
<td>School-led: includes federations and multi-academy trusts (MATs) (hence chains), but may be one other academy. Sub-types include enforced conversions of lower-attaining schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FE/HEI/public-sector-led. Sub-types include enforced conversions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith. Sub-types include chains established by faith institutions, e.g. CoE, RC, etc. and non-affiliated chains with a religious character, e.g. United Learning Trust academies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(UTCs, Alternative Provision (AP) academies and studio schools categorisable here but also constitute own type).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand-alone academy</td>
<td>Almost all are high-attaining schools which ‘converted’ to academy status after 2010. (“Conversion” here is legally meaningless: the former school closes and a new academy opens, as with the original city academies.) Sub-types include by age, faith, sex and ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free school</td>
<td>Established by existing (M)AT (sub-types include business/faith-led).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Converted from independent sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Established by local community/parent group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(UTCs, studio schools and new AP academies categorisable here but also constitute own types).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative-Provision (AP) academy</td>
<td>Converted from Pupil Referral Unit status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio school</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Types of academy

1 Sub-types of primary, secondary, single sex, etc. are not automatically given, for the sake of simplicity.

The most important is that unlike elsewhere in this paper, as a unitary legal entity (except see Alternative Provision (AP) academies) the most important distinctions between academies are concealed from the market and are instead products of
any single academy’s history and circumstances, and unlikely to influence its brand status. Nonetheless, these differences are sufficiently organisationally and culturally significant to constitute sub-types, rather than simply ‘flavours’ (Wolfe, 2013: 102). For example, the Academies Commission (2013) distinguished between what it termed Mark I, Mark II and Mark III sponsored academies. The former, created between 2002 and c.2006, sought sponsors from the private sector, who contributed up to £2 million of the school’s capital costs. Mark II academies were permitted to seek sponsors from establishments such as universities, who would not be liable for capital costs, but whose funding agreements were controlled more tightly. In Mark III sponsored academies, from 2010, some of these controls are removed. For the purposes of this research, the question is, to what extent do these differences constitute a discrete academy type? Certainly, the differing conditions made an organisational and perhaps cultural difference there, a point made by Wolfe when discussing the de-systematisation of schooling provision more generally; ‘each school [has] a legal/governance structure which reflects the circumstances and political climate of the moment of its creation’ (Wolfe, 2013: 100). To mitigate this particularising trend, therefore, Table 4 represents the features of academies’ funding agreements only in sub-type categorisations. Instead, in privileging branding, it highlights those characteristics more easily available to the market.

This typology of academies is necessarily loose because of the complexity of the terrain: AP academies may be established new or convert, for example, and UTCs are but a sub-type of free school, yet categorising them solely as such would underplay their contemporary if possibly transient importance within the education and policy landscape.

**Types of multi-school**

One of the more complex areas of school-type diversification is that represented by groupings, whereby single legal entities operate over multiple sites and/or educational providers or other collaborations unite in new and varied ways, although retaining their distinct legal identities. This phenomenon has arisen for several reasons, including school failure; headteacher recruitment problems; headteachers’ need to distinguish their school’s offer/brand locally, or sustain its existence; the propensity of school-led improvement systems, currently privileged in policy, to produce federations or chains (Chapman, 2013); the resonance of this way of working with a collective professional memory of inter-school
collaboration; and the multiple consequences of the dominant market logic which normalises take-overs and mergers. Such agglomerations can no longer satisfactorily be conceptualised merely as more-or-less formal collaborations, for as noted above, multiplicity may be a legal illusion, as with multi-academy trusts (MATs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-school type</th>
<th>Sub-type(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-academy trusts</td>
<td>School-led.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-operative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third party-led.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbrella academy trusts</td>
<td>Private-sector organisations operating as charities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federations</td>
<td>Majority governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>Cross-phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stronger-weaker school arrangement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size federations (small to medium-sized schools federating).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mainstreaming federations (special school(s) with 1+ mainstream).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith federations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching school alliances</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Types of multi-school.

1 This row adapted from Chapman et al. (2009)

Nor will legal status suffice to differentiate, since this fragments rather than orders the landscape; e.g. it is ‘possible for existing federations to apply to become academies either as separate institutions or as academy federations’ (Chapman, 2013: 5). To demarcate this as a new category, I am calling such groupings multi-schools. Table 5 necessarily describes this phenomenon in “loose” terms: whilst most of the types draw on a legal interpretation, not all do so, and may be categorised in different ways. A primary purpose of these arrangements is to replace local authorities as providers of collective support for schools with private-sector models and/or providers. This is part of the political right’s continuing attempt to undermine the post-war welfare settlements, in what
Clarke and Newman (1997: 8) describe as a shift from a welfare state underpinned by ‘bureau-professionalism’ to a managerial state privileging choice, markets and self-dependency. In doing so, accountability is redefined ‘to establish a discursive consensus which constructs teachers and schools as being in need of external regulation’ (Poulson, 2006: 585); the organisational hierarchies this facilitates are seen increasingly in newer manifestations of multi-school arrangement, where CEOs lead and manage educational provision across multiple sites with only some, contextually variable power delegated to local “leaders” and governing bodies (Wolfe, 2013). Whilst teaching-school alliances ostensibly offer a more collaborative structure and ethos, in fact leaders of such alliances are constituted as manager-consultants (Courtney, 2015) and may construct “empires” in a similar way to the CEOs of MATs (Courtney, forthcoming).

**Conceptualising types through locus of legitimacy and branding**

So, school-type diversification may usefully be illuminated from a range of perspectives such as pupil selection, but important too are new formations such as academy types and multi-schools. In this section, I unite and examine all these dimensions through two lenses: *locus of legitimation* and *branding*.

Foregrounding the locus of legitimation as a differentiating dimension permits useful insights into the role of power in the purposive and historical fragmentation of provision. By legitimation, I mean the principal source of authority for any given school to identify itself as, or be identified as *one of its type*. Since one school is simultaneously multiple types, the “looseness” of this identification, the idealisation of the resulting category, and the within-category breadth of each must be acknowledged. Nonetheless, questions remain concerning authority and ownership that can be answered objectively and whose answers are meaningful in foregrounding *who gets a say* in education provision and *whose interests are being served*. Such questions include:

- Who appoints the majority of the governing body? (And may therefore recruit or dismiss the headteacher?)
- Who owns the school’s assets (building and land)?
- Who owns the *brand*?
• How strong are forms of accountability (see Ranson, 2003) to stakeholders other than pupils, parents and communities?

• Who are these stakeholders?

• How is this represented in the school’s structures and/or legal status?

• How are these stakeholders accorded authority?

• To whom are they accountable?

• What are their values?

Posing these questions in relation to schooling provision in England prompts the identification of three loci: corporate, religious institutional and public, although the liminal spaces between these three are busy. Between the corporate and the religious are such academy trusts as United Learning, which is not affiliated to a religious institution but claims a religious character. Between the public and the religious are those voluntary-controlled and non-qualifying foundation schools where religious or trust governors have a minority presence but influence culture and values.

First, corporate legitimacy arises from successive administrations’ neoliberal policies such that ‘philanthropy and business are essential parts of the delivery and policy processes of education’ (Ball, 2013: 10). Brands may now constitute types, and are owned by quasi-private-sector trusts. Capital — through academy sponsorship — may thereby secure majority positions for its bearers as education leaders on governing bodies (Courtney, 2015). Multiple academy trusts need not delegate significant power to local governing bodies and headteachers. Through hostile take-overs, corporate legitimacy may assert itself over the wishes of communities, as at Downhills Primary School†. Corporate legitimacy is underwritten, sanctioned and operationalised by the state: the DfE sends “academy brokers” to “underperforming” schools to arrange their acquisition by preferred trust partners.

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† Downhills Primary School in North London was the site of a high-profile, unsuccessful struggle by the school’s leaders, governors and community to resist forced academisation by the Department for Education following an unsatisfactory 2012 inspection outcome, ordered by the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.
Legitimation may also derive from affiliation to a religious institution. Glimpses of this locus are evident throughout the typologies, but none fully represents the way in which faith schools have become newly meaningful through faulting and folding in the present policy landscape. Faith schools institutionalise success according to this neoliberal/conservative logic in several ways. First, they constitute a strong brand; second, and related, attainment there is perceived to be higher (though attributable partly to socio-economically unrepresentative pupil intakes (Mortimore, 2013); third, selection as an organising principle of education provision is increasingly acceptable; fourth, religious institutions have taken advantage of the promotion of alternative providers to position themselves as an exemplar for that role. As well as their historical qualifications in this regard, their ready-networked status aligns with the contemporary, neoliberal turn to network governance (Hatcher, 2014). Fifth, they often have the funds to make good on commitments to establish schools; and sixth, religious education often resonates with the neoconservative privileging of a “traditional” moral education (although these sets of interests being fluid, struggles persist over who gets to define what counts as moral (see e.g. Tran, 2014)). Of course, there are important distinctions between types of faith school in relation to the questions posed above: unlike in voluntary-controlled schools, the religious trust appoints a majority of the members of the governing body in voluntary-aided schools, and unlike in either of those two, faith academies may select only 50% according to pupils’ faith, rather than 100%, even if oversubscribed. Nevertheless, these differences do not invalidate a category which reflects the importance of religious institutions in this neoliberalised policy landscape. Exemplifying this is Higham’s (2014) study of accepted free-school proposals; 15% were from faith groups, comprising the second-greatest single source following existing state schools. He suggests that their motivation ‘often related most clearly to serving their own particular faith community’ (p. 410); this is facilitated through these schools’ arranging their own pupil admissions. Further, faith schools’ legal right to exercise ‘regard ... in connection with the termination of the employment of any teacher at the school, to any conduct on his part which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the religion’ (School Standards and Framework Act, 1998; 60.5.b.) justifies Catholic-school guidance that divorced or gay governors or senior leaders of Catholic schools may be dismissed. This constitutes a de jure exemption from the legal principle of equality in employment and recruitment. This matters because legal exemptions and academy autonomies
permit the expression and furthering of powerful religious interests on governing bodies, and/or in school culture.

The third locus of legitimation is public. Notions of “public” are liable both to oversimplification through being deployed as an incantatory shibboleth to position users in relation to neoliberal discourse, and liable also to near analytical uselessness through justifiable problematisation (see Newman, 2007). Here, “public” must recognise both that strong consumer accountability operates in all schools (Ranson, 2003) and that maintained governing bodies, following compulsory re-constitution, may contain just one LA member (DfE, 2014b). Nonetheless, maintained schools’ LA connections bear meaning in relation to “publicness” because they are multiple — the LA providing typically more services than simply governorship; because these connections may speak to a school’s identity, values and culture; and because they are legitimated through structures which at least invoke democracy. It is both ascertainable and significant whether the school buildings and land belong to the public through the LA, or to a trust, particularly corporate, whose ownership of these assets signifies their privatisation and accords trustees the right to determine what happens there. It matters that LA-centred pupil-admissions arrangements at least attempt to consider the effect of those arrangements on all a community’s schools and on the child, rather than that child’s contribution to an academy’s position in the market (Academies Commission, 2013). There is a second discourse of public legitimation, however, pertaining to stand-alone academies. This holds that legitimacy is conferred by the school’s location within a community whose members may serve as parent or staff governors, or who have transferred to co-opted status from former community-governor roles. Whilst there are no such roles for LA representatives, meaningful relations are expressed through contractual arrangements for services such as finance or human resources or simply as the vestiges of the former relationship. Accountability to the community is strong, and is calculated through consumer satisfaction and performance measures. Within these parameters, the school may fulfil its obligations to its public as it wishes.

Constructions of legitimation are necessary but insufficient for a full understanding of school-type diversification, so I propose branding to complement it. I define branding here as any appellation or status representing or invoking a characteristic, or set of characteristics, which may be claimed by or
attributed to a school to associate it with other schools possessing that same status, and which is consequential in an educational market. Sometimes, brands are customer-oriented, creating markets through differentiating curriculum, pedagogies, and ethos. Pupils understand themselves in the terms constructed by the marketing and become its consumers. In other cases, the branding is competitor-oriented to position its holder as having, following Bourdieu (1998), more symbolic capital.

Brands are problematic in typologising: brand boundaries may be blurred, as with the various combinations of specialist school; or “dead” brands may exist in the present through faulting and folding, like a school’s former ‘Leading Edge’ status proclaimed on an old school sign and still meaningful at the school gate. Nonetheless, branding is useful for conceptualising provision for two reasons. The first is its capacity to unite types which might derive from diverse discourses or sites. Branding also captures those instances when an appellation, such as “comprehensive”, or “LA-maintained/controlled” becomes imbued with negative connotations which convey meaning in a market. This speaks to the second reason why branding is essential here; the triumph of neoliberalism as a paradigm for thinking about school type diversity. Here, I apply my geological metaphor; neoliberalism overlays prior ideologies as the most recent stratum and so I am typologising through it to reinterpret what came before. Even historical features such as age are becoming deployable as consumer-oriented marketing tools through branding as all-through/all-age schools, exemplifying the tendency described above for former structures to acquire new meanings in the neoliberal present. One effect of conceptualising pupil characteristics in this fixed way, and building a school system around them, is that they become determining. This matters if, for instance, the inaccuracy of the 11+ examination in assessing (potential) ability and the consequent unfairness of its determining future life chances are not to be replicated for a new generation under the guise of technical aptitude (and its corollary, academic inaptitude). Where branding is competitor-oriented, e.g. through “excellence” denoted by Ofsted ratings, teaching-school status and prestige partnerships, and following the Bourdieuan analysis by Coldron et al. (2014), I suggest that distinctions deployed as brands are intended to enhance that school’s position in the field relative to other schools, product and producer of the hierarchisation of school types. Those headteachers or principals
with sufficient capital are able to manoeuvre their schools into those advantaged positions. This, then, is branding as symbolic violence.

**Conclusion**

This mapping reveals that despite the multiple ways to conceptualise school-type diversification, if one includes variations according to pupil sex and age which have largely been omitted from these typologies for simplicity, there are presently between 70 and 90 different types of school in England. This is not to say that parents may choose from this number: a significant proportion selects the pupil, albeit covertly and/or through branding. There is no sign that this thirty-year drive for school-type diversification will cease whichever administration governs because of the long-standing cross-party consensus regarding the appropriateness of neoliberal solutions to the “problem” of raising educational standards.

Despite the diversity, there are patterns emerging whereby corporate or corporatised actors, structures and technologies are privileged, and public assets transferred to them. Simultaneously, the neoliberal imaginary constructs markets, and so children become categorisable and schools not only differentiated, but hierarchised. Some are privileged through their discursively sanctioned links with business, such as UTCs, and others through the “quality” of the child they recruit. Old actors are thriving again: faith schools are reinvigorated and re-imagined through their adaptation to the requirements of the market. Through behaving like corporations, and through the structural similarity they share concerning governing trusts, religious institutions have been re-enabled to influence education provision in England. In a sense, though, all schools are required to act in a corporate way: their characteristics understood and performed through branding. The fragmentation explored here disguises the ways in which legitimacy to do and shape education is clustering around already-powerful individual and institutional actors whose interests do not necessarily consist solely of the educational, and whose accountability is unclear. Whilst there remains a considerable, if variously corporatised expression of “public” schooling within current provision, discursively such schools are marginalised: comprehensive is the type that dare not speak its name, and the innocently conceived collocation of LA with controlled looks, in retrospect and through a neoliberal lens, unfortunate
at best. What this means is that schooling in England cannot be described as public; what remains of the public constituting only a part of the provision. Education has been commodified and re-constituted as a private matter between individuals, yet the state still intervenes — the tension referred to above between free-market distinctiveness and the neoconservative appropriation of knowledge definition and production means that the state steers choices in pre-determined ways. So, the increase in educational providers serves to disguise how the state is becoming more, not less powerful. Importantly, both neoliberalism and neoconservatism differentiate and hierarchise pupils, the former through markets and the latter through maintaining a cultural arbitrary (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) by means of a mandated curriculum which excludes some pupils’ interests. Inevitably then, education provision will increasingly reproduce societal segregation.

The analysis presented here has international significance because neoliberalism is a global phenomenon locally realised, and so its structural manifestations are reproduced across the world. The academy, for example, is a national instantiation of a global imperative to privilege the private sector whilst invoking professional autonomy. Whilst this research shows the importance of the local and locally historical in shaping provision, variations of the academy-type are consequently seen, inter alia, in Sweden (Arreman and Holm, 2011); the USA (Kretchmar et al., 2014); Australia; New Zealand, Chile and Columbia (Chapman and Salokangas, 2012). In all these sites, they further private interests and/or corporatise professional practice and identities, and may consequently be seen as part of the global transferral of capital, economic and symbolic, to an already capitalised elite. It is in this context of economic globalisation that the rapid expansion of multi-schools makes most sense: they represent an expression of late capitalism in the provision of schooling, whereby new, corporatised networks structure away “bureaucracy” and de-systematise whatever remains of the system. This research contributes methodologically to efforts internationally to describe and explain these phenomena, speaking to conceptualisations of how neoliberal ideology and strategies are generated through restructuring reforms and offering new ways of mapping the effects of neoliberalism.

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References

Academies Act 2010 (c. 32)


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Chapter five: Examining the policy and discursive conditions for pupil self-selection into hierarchised provision

**Status:** Pending submission.

**Output:** Courtney, S.J., (forthcoming). Examining the policy and discursive conditions for pupil self-selection into hierarchised provision.

**DOI:** Pending.

**Abstract**

Accelerating the 30-year policy of school-type diversification, the Coalition government used the autonomous and corporatised academy as the legal and discursive template for studio schools and university technical colleges (UTCs), whose numbers have increased rapidly since 2010 to 30 UTCs and 34 studio schools in April 2015. In this paper, I draw on data from a wider policy scholarship using interviews with academy principals to examine these two types in particular to make three important claims. First, that they fit within a policy framework which constructs children’s capacities and abilities as fixed, knowable and differentiable in terms of predicted economic value. Second, that they are conceived to function through selection, but that the responsibility for this, following Bourdieu, is transferred from the school to the pupils and their parents where it is conceptualised as the exercise of “school choice”, thereby allowing its misrecognition. Third, that the discursive mechanism for this self-selection is branding where explicit links with prospective pupils’ (or markets’) habitus are made by schools. I argue that these features have important implications for social justice for children, whose futures are shaped by hierarchised education provision.

**Key words:** Pupil selection, school reform, academies, university technical colleges (UTCs), studio schools, Bourdieu, social justice

**Introduction**

Questions concerning the organisation of children into schooling provision and what constructions of social justice are claimed, promoted or obstructed through
that organisation are being raised across the world (e.g. Gabay-Egozi, 2015; Gale and Molla, 2014; Reay, 2012; Walford, 2014). What Ball (2003: 215) has called an ‘unstable, uneven but apparently unstoppable flood of closely inter-related reform ideas’ is framing debates on school choice (e.g. James et al., 2010), producing international variations on a model of independent, state-funded schools, called charter schools in the USA, academies in England and friskolor in Sweden (Chapman and Salokangas, 2012; Gabay-Egozi, 2015; Jabbar, 2015; West, 2014). The organisation of children into such provision — constructed through policy as school choice — and notions of social justice intersect in problematic ways. For instance, these schools have been criticised for their non-admittance or exclusion of pupils who do not add value in the terms constructed through the standards agenda, whereby ever-increasing rates of pupil progress and/or attainment in standardised assessments demonstrate value for money, educational success, and underpin the social-justice promise. In other words, social justice for children is attained through facilitating their achievement of the (arbitrary) grades which supposedly guarantee future opportunities: those not fitting the template of ideal learner are excluded from this promise. For example, Jabbar (2015) highlights how children who are disabled or speak English as a second language are inadequately provided for by the charter schools in New Orleans, reflecting similar concerns in England (Academies Commission, 2013). Where children and their parents do exercise choice, it is mediated by factors such as class, geography and identity (Coldron et al., 2010; Exley, 2013, 2014; Gabay-Egozi, 2015; Reay, 2001), showing the tension between a rational, neoliberal model of social justice theoretically available to all who make the right choices and who are willing to work hard enough and the way choice is experienced subjectively by agents with histories and identities made intelligible through structural features such as race and class. Its operationalisation reveals the power relations which position actors in the social field, implicating “thicker” issues of social justice than mere access.

This paper examines these issues using England as a site, responding to Jabbar’s (2015: 3) challenge to ‘connect contemporary contextual issues to broader historical patterns’ (p. 3) through its exploration of the evolving relationship between selection and education reform. England is of particular interest here because, as a ‘laboratory’ of neoliberal reform (Finkelstein and Grubb, 2000: 602), it is internationally pioneering in having produced sub-types of academy which I
argue in this paper exemplify the contemporary ‘strongly hierarchized diversity of school provision’ (Reay, 2012: 592) and which open a new chapter in enabling understanding of the interplay between an increasingly discursively acceptable way in England of organising children’s education provision — i.e. *pupil selection* — and social justice.

*Selection by ability* have been dirty words in English education policy for a generation, tainted by their discursive associations with a tripartite system which, from the mid-20th century, came to be seen as inequitable and ineffective (Haydn, 2004). Research into school-type diversification has shown how the neoliberal policies pursued by Secretaries of State for Education from all governing parties since around 1986, with their emphasis on differentiation of provision and choice (Courtney, in press), have been predicated on selection, albeit ostensibly a marketised form where the onus is on an empowered “consumer” to select a school, rather than on the “producer” to select its pupils. However, what these investigations also reveal, reported here, is that pupil selection by ability is once again foregrounded as a prime organising principle in English education policy and discourse. This may happen overtly; the former political imperative for selection to conceal itself behind the euphemistic language of *aptitude* is weakening: selection is becoming re-constituted as a means to gain advantage over other schools. In a corporatised education-policy landscape (Gunter and Courtney, forthcoming), this advantage has monetary value.

In this paper, I describe and theorise the discursive normalisation of a form of selection removed from the locus of the school and inscribed into the embodied dispositions and practices of pupils and their parents, where its success will rely on its misrecognition as the exercise of free and rational school choice. Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1990a,b; 1998) conceptual architecture, and in particular his insights into how agents are disposed to act in certain ways, I show how schools’ branding positions them as appropriate or otherwise for children. I demonstrate this through documentary analysis as well as interviews with four academy principals, drawing particularly on those of the academy sub-types called a university technical college (UTC) and a studio school. Complementing Gabay-Egozi’s (2015) findings concerning parents and school choice in Israel, I argue that policy in England is creating discursive conditions normalising pupils’ *self-*selection into the school they feel reflects who they are and might be. These findings suggest that in England, this self-selection is conflated with ability and
understood to be an important and normal way in ensuring the system’s functioning and in helping these children achieve their potential where this potential is conceptualised as finite. Underpinning these insights, then, are troubling policy conceptualisations of children as having fixed, knowable abilities and characteristics, and of education as serving primarily national economic goals, where the efficient, neo-Fordist sorting of children into the most appropriate environment to train them for their future role in the globalised economy is a common-sense and reasonable policy-mandated activity. This analysis contributes to a global conversation by asking challenging questions about first, the relationship between the hierarchisation underpinning late capitalism in western-style democracies and notions of social justice; and second, how this constructs groups of children as inferior — data from some participants recalling eugenics apologists’ arguments concerning the inferiority of certain people’s genes, thereby justifying their differential treatment or exclusion. This view is at the heart of policy-making in England: Dominic Cummings, Special Adviser to the then Secretary of State for Education, drawing on ideas promoted and popularised by Herrnstein and Murray (1994), has written that ‘large-scale genome wide association studies (GWAS) are likely to discover some of the genes responsible for general cognitive ability (‘g’) and specific abilities and disabilities ... This would create a whole new field of study and enable truly personalised education’ (Cummings, 2013: 74, original emphasis).

From schools’ selecting pupils to pupils’ selecting schools

The 1944 Education Act did not institute selection by ability, it merely required local education authorities (LEAs) to provide their plans for secondary-school arrangements to the Ministry of Education (Crook, 2002). Arguably, the Act did not institute what it deemed axiomatic, for ‘subsequent Ministry guidance to LEAs barely acknowledged the possibility that an LEA might wish to establish comprehensive schools throughout its administrative area’ (p. 248). Whilst by 1953, 23 out of 146 LEAs had put forward plans which included comprehensives (Haydn, 2004), in the main, the system that arose was nominally tripartite, operationalised through selecting via the eleven-plus examination, with comprehensive schools as experimental and subordinated features. This tripartite system was constituted of grammar schools for those fifth of pupils who passed
the exam and for whom there was space; secondary moderns for almost all the rest; and technical schools. The presence within the system of this latter speaks to a long-standing theme in the English education system where technical skill is deemed lacking in the young workers it produces, a theme to which I will return later. In the event, few were built and the system was consequently more bi- than tri-partite. Importantly, the right of LEAs to devise, manage and provide education arrangements locally resulted in a complex mix of selective and non-selective provision across England. Nonetheless, the number of comprehensives in England steadily grew throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the key policy text here (but not instigator of the movement, which was well developed by then) being the Department for Education and Science Circular 10/65 (DES, 1965). This, in line with the accepted role of LEAs in education, did not mandate comprehensivisation, but invited LEAs to facilitate it through the reorganisation of their provision. Concerns about the capacity of selective processes to produce a system which was reliable, equitable, socially just and which made best economic use of the human capital at its disposal led to selection’s marginalisation in policy (Haydn, 2004), leading to ‘30 years [where] the common school became the dominant model for provision for secondary education in the UK’ (p. 417).

However, where one selective (or private) school exists in an area, the intakes of all are skewed. Consequently, selection has always played a role in the English education system which is disproportionate to the number of selective schools at any time. Or as Adonis (2012) puts it, comprehensivism has never properly existed, comprehensives for him being ‘essentially a continuation of their predecessor secondary modern schools’ (p. 12). Although the policy shift away from comprehensivisation didn’t start until 1986, when the then Education Secretary Kenneth Baker announced the proposed creation of City Colleges, the mood music had changed by the mid-1970s, when the Black Papers articulated dissatisfaction with the marginalisation of selection. Bantock (1977), for instance, justified a return to selection by invoking the ‘intellectual dullness to which many of the reluctant learners of our schools belong’ (p. 80). Even as comprehensivisation became derided, there was little appetite to resuscitate selection by ability in this elitist form, and so City Colleges, with their goal to restore “lacking” technical or technological skills, were permitted to select pupils on two grounds only. First, and presaging the way in which selection would be operationalised in the future, on the basis of their aptitude for technical education;
such pupils constituting a minority supposedly ill catered for by comprehensives. The second grounds were pupils’ commitment to remain in the City College until the age of 18 (West and Bailey, 2013), and for whose ascertainment the College could interview pupils with their parents. Walford (2000) conducted research with school leaders in neighbouring schools which indicated that this selection process located ‘those very parents who had the most interest in their children’s education, and those children who were most keen and enthusiastic ... had special skills and interests in sport, art, drama or other activities [and] were seen as invigorating the atmosphere of any school’ (Walford, 2000: 11-12). So whilst this was not selection by ability as historically understood, it was a significant move away from the purposively comprehensive selection that had characterised education for a generation. It also paved the way for future versions of selection on these themes, where “ability” is conflated with “likely to attain highly”. Such constructions, in England at least, are correlated with class (Mortimore, 2013) and, as Walford’s (2000) participants observed, operationalised through motivation and crucially, through “fit”, where pupils’ “aptitude” for an area of study predicts that motivation. Aptitude had a sort of common-sense validity that spoke to a polity and a population which had remained conceptually attached to the differentiating apparatus it implied. Proponents of comprehensivism never denied different abilities and aptitudes; they merely sought to organise education around a common model that included a more-or-less representative range.

Dorling (2013: np) argues that the English were and remain attached to the notion that ‘children vary greatly in what they might be able to achieve, that some have far greater potential to do well than others, but all have only a fixed potential’, although the intensity with which this is expressed in policy varies according to the degree of economic hardship.

The discursive normalisation of selection by ability into a range of hierarchised provision has been made possible by the successive policies throughout the 1990s and 2000s to diversify that provision. However, the policy goal was to introduce a quasi-market between schools to drive up standards (Exley, 2014; Whitty, 2008), rather than to re-introduce pupil selection. City Colleges represented the opening move in this purposive diversification — this differing from the variously tolerant or supportive policies hitherto adopted regarding the extant structural product of historical diversity in the provision of schooling, e.g. concerning faith schools. A sort of diversification on the cheap was achieved through the specialist-schools
programme, where existing secondary schools could bid for extra funding in return for focusing on one area (or more, for more highly attaining schools) of their curriculum and working with other schools and a business partner (Bell and West, 2003). These could select up to 10% of their pupils for aptitude in their curricular specialism where this was in sport, the performing or visual arts, modern foreign languages, design and technology or information technology (DfE, 2014).

Diversification was also attempted through further supply-side interventions. These had a faltering start — CTCs were deemed a policy failure (Adonis, 2012) with only fifteen built; Grant-Maintained schools, which had opted out of LEA “control” and were funded directly from central government, were abolished by Blair’s Labour government in 1998; and sponsored Grant-Maintained schools, structural forerunners of today’s free schools, quickly spluttered out (Walford, 2000). In the longer term, however, school-type diversification has become an important and successful focus of neoliberal education policy. This is because of the success of academies; legally and structurally similar to CTCs, but pump-primed in their initial phase through the Labour government’s reduced requirement for sponsors to provide capital investment, and subsequently through their status as a flag-ship policy for the Coalition government from 2010–2015. Whilst it is beyond the remit of this paper to explore in more detail the Academies Programme (see e.g. Academies Commission, 2013; Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Gunter, 2011; Wilkins, 2012), what is crucial here are two features. First, academies are permitted to select up to 10% of their pupils. Second, and more importantly, they are their own admission authority, where ‘there is evidence that schools that control their own admissions are more likely to be socially selective than community schools’ (Academies Commission, 2013: 65). As well as through selection, the other way in which the pupil characteristics and abilities on roll are manipulated is through exclusion, and here, the Academies Commission (2013: 74) found ‘evidence of significantly higher rates of exclusion within academies than in local authority maintained schools’. These features have led to concerns being raised ‘of some academies willing to take a ‘low road’ approach to school improvement by manipulating admissions rather than by exercising strong leadership’ (Academies Commission, 2013: 7-8).

And so, even as the academy “type” is revealed to facilitate various forms of selection, including by ability, and in overt and covert ways, the very category of
academy has produced new sub-types (Courtney, in press): what had been understood as a *species* has quickly become a *genus*, whose evolutionary descendants all share a structural facility for selection. What is more, the distinction between these new types, as between grammar schools and secondary moderns, is operationalised largely through a differentiated curriculum and differing expectations of pupil destination, the latter producing the former. So university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools are academy sub-types which are positioned within a neoliberal policy context where difference is understood in terms of branding and the purpose of difference is to create and serve markets. They are academy chains actualised through branding, where the brand is owned and managed by an academy trust. For UTCs, this is the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (known as the BDT), led by former Education Secretary Kenneth Baker, and for studio schools it is the Studio Schools Trust (SST). What differentiates them from other chains such as United Learning or E-Act is that they do not sponsor their academies in the legal sense outlined by Wolfe (2013), where the trust is the sole legal entity and has responsibility for making good on its contractual promise to the Department for Education to deliver education across a number of sites, i.e. individual academies. Each UTC and studio school consequently has a number of sponsors besides the BDT or SST and these latter trusts have a minor or non-existent continuing role in governance. Where these trusts have proved pioneering, however, is in their elevation of the brand to a new school type: United Learning might have more control over its academies, but there is (presently) no such thing as a United Learning school type. Such a type-defining yet governance-active trust is surely on the horizon.

Both UTCs and studio schools share a conceptualisation of the purposes of education centred on future gainful employment; this is operationalised structurally through such areas as the length and composition of the school day, a curriculum co-constructed with industry and a signature work-related pedagogy which subordinates teaching and teachers to industry and industrialists as this guidance from the BDT illustrates:

[Teachers must grow accustomed to] working in multi-disciplinary teams which include people from different backgrounds and with different skills, appreciating that the teacher is not the “top professional” in the UTC. (Mitchell, n.d.: 8)
It is also highlighted in marketing materials to prospective pupils and their parents, exemplified by this extract from an Ofsted report:

There is a positive, work-like atmosphere in this school. Expectations are high and teachers work hard to ensure students achieve well. One parent told inspectors "each morning my son doesn’t say he’s going to school, he says he’s going to work". (Ofsted, in Studio Schools Trust, n.d.: n.p.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>In UTCs</th>
<th>In studio schools</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil age</td>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>14-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working day</td>
<td>8.30–5</td>
<td>9–5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Curriculum features          | Technical specialisms: *engineering*, *manufacturing*, *health sciences*, *product design*, *digital technologies* and *built environment*. UTCs specialise in up to two. | National curriculum taught thematically:  
  - *Communicating with others*  
  - *Discovering through technology*  
  - *Understanding the world*  
  - *Transforming my community*  
  - *Enterprising and creative behaviour*  
  - *Leading healthy lifestyles*. Projects are mapped against a skills framework, called ‘CREATE’. |
| Pedagogies                   | Subjects taught with reference to the specialism(s); in line with UTC ethos concerning employability; and employer-led projects taught. | Curriculum taught through enquiry-based, enterprise project learning. |
| Curriculum co-constructed with | Industry and university sponsors and other partners                     | Industry sponsors and other partners                                                |
| Qualifications               | Pupils leave with mostly level-three (A level equivalent) qualifications, including technical.  
  At level 2 (GCSE equiv.) they study English, maths, two sciences, and tech qualifications. Modern foreign language and humanities available. | Pupils leave with mostly level-two (GCSE equivalent) qualifications in English, maths, science and vocational areas. |
| Size                         | Around 600 pupils                                                       | Around 300 pupils                                                                  |
| Stated selection policy      | All-ability                                                             | All-ability                                                                       |
| Sponsor(s) from              |  
  - A university  
  - Business |  
  - Business  
  - Public or third-sector organisations |
| Brand owner                  | Baker Dearing Educational Trust                                       | Studio Schools Trust                                                               |

*Table 1. The characteristics of UTCs and studio schools*
Table 1 illustrates these similarities, but also the differences; these are key to my claim that UTCs and studio schools offer differentiated and hierarchised provision into which policy and discourse normalise children’s self-selection. So, for instance, studio schools offer qualifications at a generally lower level and a more restricted curriculum. The “CREATE” skills framework, followed by studio schools and referred to in the “curriculum features” row of Table 1, is a feature denoting hierarchical distinction between the two types (see Studio Schools Trust, 2014). The framework comprises six skills, i.e. communication, relating to others, enterprise, applied, thinking and emotional intelligence, through which the project-based work is delivered. These skills evoke if not replicate the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills taught to pupils aged from 11 in England, initially under New Labour but continuing into the Coalition government (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2011), and so their inclusion here in a school of 14–19 year olds exemplifies studio schools’ lower curricular expectations in relation to UTCs.

What the differences highlighted in Table 1 permit, particularly the “qualifications” and “curriculum features” rows, are claims concerning how these two types construct their own market through targeting groups of pupils whose mutual possession of characteristics constructed as key, including ability but also disposition, categorises them for the purposes of schooling. Concerns about the place of studio schools within hierarchised provision have started to be raised. In McGinity’s (2015), ethnographic study in a school which converted to a multi-academy trust, opening a studio school on-site alongside what was re-named the professional school, she questions ‘the categorisation of young people into routes which may reduce the full range of opportunities at the end of the formal process’ (p.69). This analysis therefore seeks to contribute empirically and conceptually to these emergent concerns. In the next section, I will set out the research design underpinning this paper and the conceptual tools provided by Bourdieu which I have used to theorise the data. Then, I draw on empirical data and policy texts to illuminate the relationship between hierarchised provision, a newly intensive marketised policy landscape and the discursive normalisation of selection by ability predicated on pupil self-sorting.
The study

The analysis in this paper draws on data generated as part of a wider study into school leadership at a time of system diversification, competition and flux. Through this project, I have sought to theorise the ways in which headteachers and principals navigating this fragmenting terrain understand and do leadership, and what this means for policy and other stakeholders. The first stage of the research was a mapping of the diversified landscape of provision using primary and secondary sources (Courtney, in press). Examples of the former included ministers’ speeches, legislation, white papers, marketing materials and policy texts, and examples of the latter comprised mostly scholars’ interpretations of these. In the second stage, the mapping was used to categorise the secondary schools in a large metropolitan area. Ten school types were identified as conceptually, politically or discursively relevant to the study: all examples of these within (and for rarer types, beyond) the metropolitan area were listed and filters applied (e.g. Ofsted rating and popularity) to arrive at a shortlist of three schools for each of the ten types. The ten leaders of the first-placed of the three schools were invited to be interviewed, with the second (and then third) placed invited subsequently where those initial invitees refused: nine leaders finally consented (two categories were merged owing to duplication of key characteristics, which emerged as the sample came together). I interviewed these headteachers and principals three times over 18 months in order to capture any changes resulting from rapidly changing contexts and to focus on different areas of their leadership on each occasion. For this paper, I am using the data from four of the participants (see Table 2), whose school types and/or accounts spoke particularly to the themes of selection or hierarchisation. Three of the four lead those forms of academy which are identified in the analysis below as hierarchised or are openly selective, and the fourth, Paul, employs the discourse of hierarchisation in his account of leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Academy Type — pupils aged 11–16 unless stated otherwise</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Academy converter: selective grammar. 11–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>University Technical College. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney</td>
<td>Studio school. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Free school: parent-led, comprehensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. The sample whose data are used in this paper.*
I undertook a further round of documentary analysis in researching this paper in order to supplement and illuminate the themes of selection and fixed ability which I identified in the interview data. I restricted my search for texts to the websites of the two trusts whose types are investigated here: the Baker Dearing and the Studio School Trusts. This was because this research seeks to enable understanding of the ways in which these types are marketed, which is predominantly done through official, trust-owned outlets. I located relevant documents and pages through scanning for key words, including “selection”, and read the texts critically to identify the discourses which they reproduce and of which they are the product. To achieve this, I interrogated the texts according to theme; lexis; relationship between words; assumptions; metaphors; and effect.

To theorise the way in which policy and principals’ accounts reveal the discursive dominance of selection in a hierarchised landscape of provision, I draw on Bourdieu, and particularly on his concept of habitus. For Bourdieu, the conceptualisation of human activity in social space and time through the dichotomous constructs of structure and agency is false. Bourdieu sought to transcend this binary through positing that agents acquire and embody sets of dispositions through early inculcation and iterative experience to act and think in certain ways; these dispositions he called the habitus, defined as:

... systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

In other words, reified, embodied history and the ‘material conditions of existence’ (Maton, 2008: 50) become a tool for negotiating consciously or responding subconsciously to the present.

As an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production — and only those. (Bourdieu, 1990b: 55)

As Reay (2004: 433) puts it, ‘the most improbable practices are rejected as unthinkable, but, concomitantly, only a limited range of practices are possible’. Nonetheless, Bourdieu intended habitus to permit ‘virtuosi ... able to play the game up to the limits, even to the point of transgression, while managing to stay
within the rules of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990a: 78). Enhancing the ‘vagueness and indeterminacy’ (Bourdieu, 1990a: 77, original emphasis) of his conceptualisation of the habitus is the unpredictability of its encounter with the field where it is put to use. For Bourdieu, fields such as those of “education” or “business” are ‘relations of power and struggle’ (Bourdieu, 1990a: 87) together constituting social space: the struggles concern the retention or gain of capital, whose conceptualisation as multiple (comprising cultural, social, economic and symbolic forms) and exchangeable is central to Bourdieu’s sociology. Practices arise from the interactions between habitus, capital and field.

Creating the policy and discursive conditions for pupil self-selection

The construction of pupils as differentiable markets necessarily characterises their skills, capacities, preferences and intellects as more-or-less fixed and knowable. This is clear in the data, where accounts from principals from all types of school confirm the sort of fixed-ability thinking identified above by Dorling (2013). Phil, headteacher of a selective academy (former grammar), exemplifies this, showing how small a step it is from categorisation to eugenics.

I’m now working in a school where every group is a top set. And that’s the difference ... Every school and every child is different, but it is more focused here on that top-ability range, because we get that raw material, it’s genetic [laughs]. (Phil)

Phil misrecognises the cultural capital of his pupils and their parents which has facilitated their path to his selective school, seeing it not even as the result of that neoliberal trope, individual hard work, but as more fundamental; genetic. Viewing the data through Phil’s eyes is a productive way of understanding the differentiation of provision described here, where goods of lower quality are deemed sufficient for whole classes of children deemed unable genetically, therefore inescapably, to appreciate better. Whilst there is much in these principals’ accounts that speaks of children’s potential, including the purpose of schools and schooling to help them achieve it, that potential is often conceived as finite:

[Education is about] respecting every individual, and acknowledging every individual and helping every child achieve the best they can. (Paul)
[Education is] about getting involved and letting the children grow and doing the best that they can. (Phil)

A lot of the people work we do in school I think is based around you can't really change what people are. You can change behaviours and you can change some understandings, but people are who they are and you work with what you've got, really, to some extent. (Phil)

In the data, there is support for the notion that schools as well as pupils are categorisable, and that a good education is achieved through finding an appropriate match between consumer and product/service:

What you need to do is test the school and find out whether it is the school that fits in with how you want your child to grow up, because the school they're in will affect that. (Paul)

And that's, that's what my values are, it's about providing education that is right and proper for them. (Paul)

Schools should be free to develop styles and structures that suit their demographic. (Rodney)

This is a long-standing characteristic of provision in England (see e.g. Ball et al., 1996). However, there is not a virtually infinite number of structural or curricular options available which might be matched to the full expression of pupils’ diversity: part of the role of the neoliberal state is to steer consumption through regulating provision — this notwithstanding invocations of market freedom — and thereby human behaviour such that national economic goals are achieved (Newman, 2007; Olssen and Peters, 2005). These goals are currently constructed through education policy (and feed through into school leaders’ accounts) as obtainable through the privileging of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in the context of workplace-skill development, where the experts are industrialists rather than teachers:

The curriculum ... [and] the pedagogy ... in a studio school is radically different. It's based on project-based learning built around contextualised, real-life challenges that you devise in tandem with employers. (Rodney)

The students ... [have] a lot of people coming in and contextualising the application of some of the theory they're learning, but real people, not educationalists telling them, you know. (Will)

Achieving these economic goods is constructed as analogous with promoting social justice for pupils:
I’ve had young people that are at risk of becoming NEETS [Not in Education, Employment or Training] who are truculent, quite challenging individuals, and then I’ve put them through an engineering programme, and then they’ll be meaningfully employed as an engineering apprentice. (Will)

So, beyond the consequence that the fundamental, eponymous principle underpinning comprehensivism is no longer in evidence, what has been constructed is a superficially diverse system whose features nonetheless cluster around the promotion of STEM subjects and skills deemed appropriate for the workplace by sponsoring and/or partnering employers. The objective is to produce future workers in industrialists’ construction of the global economy rather than, for example, scholars and critical thinkers (Saltman, 2010):

[There are] students that are already seeing themselves as somebody something slightly different: not a student, not a them-and-us, but … there is a good, sort of corporate recognition and responsibility. (Will)

The categorisation of pupils into target markets appropriate or otherwise for these schools is clear in marketing texts online, where the language is explicitly about “fit“:

UTCs offer a very particular curriculum that combines a solid academic education with a technical and practical one. Many UTC students report that it was the technical specialism that attracted them to the UTC. For the right student this provides an environment that is geared to their interests. (Baker Dearing Educational Trust, n.d.: n.p., emphasis added)

This means that notwithstanding claims for a comprehensive selection policy, UTCs and studio schools construct differentiated and hierarchised “ideal pupils” as markets. This is a process of exclusion as much as “fit”, where sometimes that fit is wrong:

We had one young person in year ten who was with us, who left at the first half term and went back to his old school. He wasn’t arty, but he wasn’t right for the UTC either. (Will)

There are some UTCs that have sadly had to permanently exclude a number of students in the first term of operation because that was the only way they could actually access the appropriate support for that young person who should never have been there in the first place. (Will)

Doesn’t suit all kids. With my two kids, my daughter wouldn’t have liked it, she would kind of prefer an abstract style of learning. My son would have loved it. Given he hated the sort of abstract, academic work. (Rodney)
The pupils who “fit” are targeted through branded messages foregrounding the school’s curriculum and distinctive pedagogies, where certain words may or may not be used in accordance with brand-building through marketing:

I use the word technical a lot, our chairman uses the word vocational, cause it is vocational, but politically, for parents I avoid using the word because they’ll just think, oh, it’s not for my son or daughter. It’s for all the kids that can’t spell their name, and stuff like that. (Will)

Importantly, these branded messages are designed to appeal only to the “right” market:

Parents will tell me that they really like the sound of it, and they think it’s really good, but not necessarily for their kids. (Rodney)

What marketing texts permit is the transfer of the locus of responsibility for pupil selection from the school to pupils and parents, who are expected to recognise themselves-as-consumers in the brand and respond in a way rendered intelligible through the discourse of school choice, exemplified in this marketing material:

[Children applying to UTCs] have a spark of self knowledge, however, which means they have chosen a specialist technical context for their future education’ (Mitchell, n.d.: 6)

This shift permits simultaneous denials of selectivity on the part of the school, where the expectation is explicitly on the student to exercise choice correctly, and reminders that selection is available to academy-type schools. For example, in response to the question, ‘are studio schools selective?’ in the FAQ section of that trust’s website, it states:

No ... They are a 14-19 options choice, aimed at students who are better suited to a more ‘hands on’ approach to learning. However it should be noted that, as academies, they do have the option to select 10% of their students by reference to a specific aptitude. (Studio Schools Trust, 2011: n.p.)

What these texts illuminate through employing contradicting discourses of normalisation and disavowal is the occlusion but not the negation of selection, where selection should, might and yet also does not happen. The effect of this ambivalence is to keep selection in play but to decouple it from subjects’ agency through moving continually its locus of operation, meaning that responsibility for it may not be easily ascribed but simultaneously that all agents, including students, are invited to engage in the process of (self) selection. As the offer is
hierarchised, with UTCs proposing a wider curriculum at a higher level with more prestigious, i.e. university partners, so the markets — or children — constructed through that offer are hierarchised. Students are not told explicitly that they are choosing an inferior product. This can be seen in the SST’s response to the question of whether pupils may progress to university following their studies:

Yes ... On leaving their Studio School, students will have gained at least Level 2 qualifications, and will be able to study at Level 3 and beyond. They will have a range of progression routes available to them including the potential to go to university. (Studio Schools Trust, 2011: n.p.)

What is not made clear through this is that it will be impossible for a typical student leaving with level-two qualifications to progress directly to university without further study, as a typical UTC pupil would be able to do with level-three qualifications. Such language facilitates the illusion of parity, where the only difference concerns pupils’ “fit” rather than “level”.

Evident throughout these data is the conflation of ability and class, whether the relationship is understood as being predicated on genetics or on some notion of demography, as shown by Rodney:

The studio schools, I think, are better, because they're more flexible. You can tailor them more closely to the demographics of the kids.

Bourdieu’s concept of habitus was conceived and has subsequently been developed to speak to class as well as individual dispositions:

To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or tastes) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition and, through the mediation of the habitus and its generative capability, a systematic set of goods and properties, which are united by an affinity of style. (Bourdieu, 1998: 7-8)

I follow Ball et al. (1996) in arguing that this discursive normalisation of pupil self-selection, revealed in principals’ data and reproduced through policy texts and structural reform, might be understood through collective, largely class-based habitus. As Ball and his colleagues argue, ‘choice is orientated to and informed by class thinking. Parents may be said to be seeking a match between family habitus and school habitus’ (p. 98). Working-class children, having less of the cultural capital that counts held by their more socio-economically advantaged peers, are encouraged through branding to identify with hierarchically inferior forms of
provision — in this analysis exemplified by studio schools. They should not only accept but actively perpetuate this situation because the characteristics of this provision align with what they have come to expect of themselves through experience. What richer parents dismiss as ‘not for their children’ is perceived as appropriate by the working class:

[Habitus] make distinctions between ... what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth. But the distinctions are not identical. Thus, for instance, the same behavior or even the same good can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another. (Bourdieu, 1998: 8)

So hierarchisation and its effects, following Bourdieu (1990), are subject to misrecognition, where agents — here, studio school pupils — should understand their subaltern position as doxic, or the way things are and should be, rather than as the result of their inadequate capital to influence the game they are playing. Through this lens, the level-three qualifications and university experiences associated with UTCs through their marketing are not features many such pupils ever expected to experience and are not associated with their anticipated future lives and requirements. This self-location is simultaneously a position-taking within the field of schooling where the power of the capitalised to occupy the better positions is invisibly re-asserted.

**Implications and conclusion**

In this paper, I have explored policy texts and drawn on the accounts of academy principals to provide firmer empirical grounds than previously existed for claims concerning the hierarchisation of schooling provision, and in particular new forms of academy-type provision. I have shown that UTCs and studio schools fit conceptually within a marketised system where curricular and pedagogical distinction is a consequence and goal of policies to encourage academy principals and the owners of whole academy-type brands to take advantage of their freedom to do so. However, I have argued that much of this distinction is illusory, both forms examined here being centred on STEM subjects and employers’ (understood as analogous to national economic) needs. Where types differ is in the perceived ability of the pupils they are marketed towards — I have argued that this ability is understood as largely fixed, that pupils may consequently be categorised in ability groups constructed as markets, and that education policy
constructs school types which are similarly hierarchised to match these markets. This structure requires selection, and here I have drawn on Bourdieu to argue that principals conceptualise pupils’ recruitment into this hierarchised provision in the way constructed and promoted through policy: as a process of self-selection in response to school branding which speaks to pupils’ habitus, allowing the reproduction of advantage to be misrecognised as doxa. The analysis set out here has a number of implications and I want to return here to one raised in the introduction; social justice. In this model, social justice is reduced to a thinly conceived individualist instrumentalism which reneges on its promise to deliver even on those meagre terms. Gewirtz (1998), following Rawls, identifies as distributional justice that form which foregrounds the ‘fair distribution of resources, both material and non-material’. Gewirtz goes on to warn researchers ‘to be clear about our own beliefs about what ought to constitute fairness’ (p. 470). Through the construction of a distributional system where hierarchised positions held by pupils within the field are fixed and reified, and their reification held as doxic, I suggest that what we are seeing here is unfairness construed and construable as just, since not only are pupils to receive in an efficient and effective manner those educational goods — and only those — relevant and appropriate for someone like them, but moreover, they are to exercise their own agency in making it so. This element brings into play Gewirtz’s (1998) second element of social justice: relational, where I contend that the relations upon which this model depends rely on the misrecognition of the way in which disadvantage is perpetuated by those experiencing it. It would not be possible for such pupils easily to achieve the same outcomes as those attending hierarchically superior schools, belying the fundamental neoliberal tenet that rewards, including social justice, result from hard work alone. Indeed, here I follow Corcoran (2015) in widening applications of a capability approach beyond inclusion and impairment (e.g. Terzi, 2005) to suggest that this purposive structuring out of, for example, studio school pupils’ potential to transform their latent capacity into active functioning constitutes an attempt by the state not just to reproduce advantage in the way theorised by Bourdieu (1990b), but thereby to disable predominantly working-class children. What they will ultimately be capable of doing is not what they once had the potential to do, but merely what they are required to do to function in lower-skilled rungs of corporate, probably technological private enterprises, facilitating the accumulation of capital to corporate elites. This may sound bleak, but there is hope for the future: the closure of two of the first UTCs
to open (Evans, 2015) shows, perhaps, that pupils’ agency is being enacted in counter-discursive ways, and/or that the technical offer underpinning both school types is unattractive to “consumers”; the tension between the state’s steer towards economically useful skills and children’s expectation of “choice” finally becoming clear through the stark metric of admissions.

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Chapter six: The courtier’s empire: A case study of providers and provision

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**Introduction**

In this chapter, I explore how headteachers and principals† in England are becoming increasingly hierarchised and their space for agency constrained by newly powerful regional actors. These latter may either belong to a corporate elite or succeed through adopting their methods, and are achieving newly exalted positions within an education policy landscape of corporate-inspired structural reform. These elite system-leaders are building empires of education provision, defining what is possible as a headteacher for others in such empires and even what is meant by school leadership.

The neoliberal and neoconservative reform agenda to which education has been subjected since the mid-1980s has enabled a corporate elite to open or acquire publically funded schools. This elite embodies the ideal, entrepreneurial leader constructed through policy and lauded by policy-makers. In England, for instance, from 2000, “under-performing” local-authority (LA, or district) schools have been replaced by independent, business-sponsored state-funded academies (homologous with charter schools in the USA). Their architect, Andrew Adonis, praised lavishly elite corporate leaders of academies’ forerunners as ‘highly capable sponsor-managers, who ran their schools free of the shifting sands of local and national education bureaucracies’ (2012: 56). Some of those name-checked, such as Peter Vardy and Harry Djanogly, have had this preferment

† Those in charge of academy-type schools (similar to Charter schools in the US) are called principals to differentiate them from their equivalents in the maintained sector, headteachers.
formalised through a knighthood or through their frequent appearances in key networks. So, the phenomenon of elite, corporate education providers at the State Court is not new. These courtiers market key state policies through embodying their objectives, means and privileged status. What is new, and is explored in this chapter, is the way in which the subjectivities and practices of headteachers and principals subordinated by corporate, or corporatised elites are being structured within the regional empires these courtiers are establishing through corporate structural models facilitating expansion and acquisition and through their personal contacts with powerful actors. These arguments make a contribution to the literatures concerning how headteachers position themselves and are positioned in relation to external change (e.g. Grace, 1995; Gunter and Forrester, 2009; Thomson, 2010) and/or within a local field (e.g. Coldron et al., 2014; McGinity, 2014). The chapter makes this contribution through discussing and typologising three responses to headteacher/principal subordination to corporate elites; the “follower”, the “acquired”, and the “excluded”.

The empirical data and arguments are illuminated through Bourdieu’s concepts of capital, misrecognition and symbolic violence; these two latter explain how agents interpret the effects of arbitrary power relations which may subordinate them in ways that make that subordination seem natural, or doxic. I interviewed nine school leaders in the region (Courtney, 2015b), three of whom raised these issues unprompted. This is one geographical instantiation of the effects of facilitating business-derived models of organisational expansion within an education “system”. Nevertheless, an overly ‘particularizing reading’ (Bourdieu, 1998: 1) of this analysis would overlook the multiplication of such sites internationally, where neoliberalism is producing recognisably similar themes and phenomena (e.g. Saltman, 2010).

Gaining elite status as a system-leading Headteacher

The empire prompting this analysis was created by Brian Sykes CBE⁶, CEO of a multi-academy trust (MAT) here referred to as Eckersley Trust. A MAT is an independent legal entity which enters into a contractual arrangement with the Secretary of State in the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver education

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⁶Brian Sykes, research participants and organisations are pseudonymised.
across multiple sites in return for state funding. These sites, known as sponsored academies, have no distinct legal identity. MATs consequently structurally facilitate aggressive expansionism by canny CEOs such as Sykes. MAT status is not the only means for headteachers or principals to increase their operational range: Sykes also leads a teaching-school alliance. Teaching schools were developed to take responsibility for initial and early-career teacher education; leadership development; designating, accrediting and brokering specialist leaders of education (SLEs) who provide school support; and research and development (Husbands, 2014). The teaching school operationalises these functions through its formal network, called an alliance, of schools and other institutions. Its purposes and effects fit within a neoliberal policy framework which autonomises schools by transferring educational responsibilities within the alliance from the “expert knowers” in universities (teacher education) and LAs (school support) to “practitioner knowers” in schools. This knowledge is packaged and sold through a consultancy model, whereby needful schools inside and outside the alliance bid for support from SLEs, and teaching-school leaders manage those bids (Courtney, 2015a). Sykes, along with other elite academy principals, has obtained MAT and teaching-school lead status and is using them to leverage increasing symbolic and economic capital at the expense of regional competitors. Sykes embodies the new policy construction of best practice in leadership which privileges that of systems rather than of education. There is a key role for those constructed as leaders in this reform:

Huge change is taking place enabling us not just to unlock the power of education to change lives but also to convert the school system into a genuinely school-led system, not run by central or local bureaucrats but by school leaders themselves who must be the best people to drive it forward. (Nash, 2014: n.p.)

So, just as with New Labour from 1997–2010, a neoliberal reform agenda is operationalised through appealing to a re-configured leadership (Gunter, 2012) which constructs an elite cadre of believers to lead whole systems, and whose purpose is to replace LAs in delivering those systemic functions. This turn empowers new actors, especially those like Sykes who have spent their careers acquiring increasingly privileged statuses. The provenance of some of these actors in the public sector blurs the boundary between public and private, permitting corporatised leadership to flourish and disguising the significance of social capital through extensive private-sector networks. Several elements typify
elite system-leader status; their achievement signals to peers as well as parents-as-consumers that the bearer has, following Bourdieu (1990), more symbolic capital in the field (Coldron et al., 2014). Two of these are relevant to this discussion: first, academisation and subsequent development into a MAT, and second, eligibility to bid for teaching school status.

In England, by November 2014, 21.6% of state schools in England were academies (DfE, 2014), although this proportion rises to around 60% of secondary schools. Questions regarding their ownership, leadership, purposes and effects are consequently matters of great concern to researchers and practitioners internationally, especially as the economic conditions of late capitalism favour in education provision, as elsewhere, the concentration of power and capital into fewer hands and the consequent emergence of elites. In England, this is seen as academies are increasingly subject to legal, cultural and organisational mergers into chains, whose most common form is the MAT. A major concern has been the prospect of education’s privatisation through academy sponsorship by elite corporate actors (Gunter and Courtney, forthcoming; Saltman, 2010). However, poor performance and governance in some academy chain sponsors (see e.g. Downs, 2013) has opened up a new front, whereby (previously) public-sector actors are corporatised through adopting the purposes and methods of the corporate elite, even reconstituting their identities to succeed in a corporatised policy environment. This success is exemplified through elite system-leader status as CEO of a MAT. All academy chains with a business or charitable sponsor share a MAT governance structure: the arrangements therefore come with state approval, owing largely, according to Deborah Perry** (undated), to their ‘clear lines of accountability’ and, exemplifying the tail wagging the dog, to their offering ‘a structure within which the role of an Executive Head can be readily utilised’ (n.p.). The hierarchisation of those heading up schools may therefore be seen as a policy goal, and the formation of elite members a corollary of this. Leadership of a teaching school is another indicator of elite membership (Husbands, 2014). Through their responsibilities in, e.g. school-to-school support and teacher/leader development, these leaders have a structural reach far beyond what had been possible. Schools may bid for this status if they receive

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outstanding in at least three (the overall rating; leadership; and teaching) of the five categories rated by the school inspectorate in England, Ofsted.

A considerable number of schools and their leaders fulfil these criteria so far: the final criterion which distinguishes the small group from whose members Eckersley’s CEO is drawn is high social capital demonstrated by access to the political elite, constituted of, for instance, ministers and their aides, high-ranking civil servants along with certain people from business, the media and the arts. Describing this phenomenon in the London Evening Standard, Anne McKelvoy called this elite ‘the new network-ocracy [whose members] float between different spheres of influence, with a handy web of friends and contacts in similarly lofty positions’ (McKelvoy, 2015: np). In education, affiliates and (near) members of this elite attend or chair national committees or councils, gain honours or other official recognition, and are designated “preferred bidders” in acquisitions and tenders. The line between the corporate elite and those who mimic them is consequently blurred. Next, I shall present and discuss data from three of the headteachers and principals I interviewed as part of a wider study into school leadership in neoliberal times. Their responses demonstrate the ways in which their identities and practices are structured by Sykes’ activities, who also leads Eckersley’s teaching-school alliance. I have typologised their responses as the “follower”; the “acquired”; and the “excluded”, and in so doing I offer a partial, empirical answer to Thomson’s (2010) challenge to the field to identify when and how heads work collectively; when they are ‘prepared to cede decisions to a networked organisation’ (p. 17) and which decisions they retain.

The “follower”

Phil Ormerod is the headteacher of a selective grammar school which recently academised. These features, along with the school’s “outstanding” rating by Ofsted, mean that it and he have, following Bourdieu (1990), significant symbolic capital in the fields of education and educational leadership. Fifteen years ago, these qualities would have sufficed to indicate elite status, but in a policy context where advantage accrues to those who demonstrate the capacity and ambition to lead multi-academy trusts, Phil is obliged to acknowledge his (and his school’s) subaltern status through joining the teaching-school alliance led by Eckersley Trust. Phil is suspicious of powerful, charismatic MAT CEOs, describing them as
‘doing a little bit of empire-building’, with questions about whether the ‘overriding moral purpose is ... to improve the overall shape of schools, which a lot of them will say, or is it about making sure that you're at the heart of what's going on?’ Success in this case is attributed not to expertise, but because Sykes ‘is a personal contact of Michael Gove [then Secretary of State for Education], and is his favourite headteacher of all time’. With only small differences in choices taken, preference, leadership qualities or circumstance, the ingredients existed for Phil to be a CEO like Sykes. Instead, Phil is a skilled interpreter of what the shifting exigencies of policy mean for his own positioning:

We had this discussion at the governing body; I was kind of saying to them, ‘look, we need to get involved somewhere, we can't be an island’. You can't be. We're good, and we're confident, but even for us, to not be involved somewhere would be seen as weakness.

Even so, Phil reports that, ‘I feel like we're in the game, but ... I'm kind of playing around at the edges rather than diving in full speed ahead’. This cautious approach to Eckersley Trust’s teaching-school alliance involves a semi-detached participation whereby he is ‘on the inside’ only ‘to find out exactly what is going on’. This is first, to see what further positioning on his part might be required, and second, to escape sanctions:

   It's almost ticking the Ofsted box; it's ticking the, we have a system-wide responsibility as a school to make sure we're part of system improvement. And if you're not, you're going to be criticised for it ... The playing a game thing is actually almost covering our back, because that's the political agenda.

Phil frames these alliance-related activities as necessary consequences of his strategic decision to join rather than out of any sense of their contributing to a wider vision for educational excellence:

   We’ve had people on outstanding teacher programmes, improving teacher programmes, doing the School Direct [school-based teacher education conducted through the alliance]. We've been involved in the research ... So that kind of thing is happening.

These are passively described as things which are happening, and not things which he is initiating for the good of his pupils or staff. In another example, Phil describes his participation in Eckersley Trust’s bidding process for an important local contract to lead a regional curriculum hub as being ‘sort of on their paperwork’. What is missing is any talk of Phil’s own vision work within this
alliance, which is contemporarily constructed through policy as equating to leadership itself (Courtney and Gunter, 2015). So, Phil’s association with Eckersley Trust, despite his symbolic capital, relegates him to one of the led rather than permitting significant expression of agentic leadership. He misrecognises this loss of agency as his active dismissal of what he sees as a lack of substance in Eckersley’s performed empire-building:

It's a bit of an Emperor’s clothes situation ... I think it's all gloss and underneath there's no real substance to what's going on ... People are doing stuff, but it's not co-ordinated in the teaching-school framework as people think it is.

This misrecognition is articulated as phlegmatic acceptance about not being in the top-tier of school leadership; he reasons that ‘we can’t have 3,000 Brians running around the place, you know ... A lot of heads don't always take that approach. They're not all ego-centric expansionists’. Phil anticipates too that Sykes will come up against other elite system-leaders and whose empires might overlap: ‘I don't think they'll be working together, I think they'll be carving it up, separately. It is a much more business, free-market world we're living in. Whether that's a good thing or not, time will tell’.

The “acquired”

At the time of our first interview, Will was about to open a new type of academy called a University Technical College (UTC). These were conceived by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (BDT), which owns and manages the brand, to offer technical education to 14–18 year olds following a corporate pattern of working hours; sponsorship by important corporations who are represented on the governing body; a curriculum co-constructed with industry partners and partly delivered by industrialists; and close links with a university. In our second interview, Will spoke of his concerns about recruitment to the new UTC. Owing to its entry age, which is out of sync with surrounding schools, pupils intending to go there would have to leave their current school at age 14, which would lose the funding accompanying them. This was one of the reasons which disinclined local headteachers to support Will’s UTC. Furthermore, he reported that the UTC’s educational partner/sponsors’ ‘capacity to support in the way that we needed support wasn’t there’. Six months later in our final interview, Will announced that the UTC was ‘in the process of becoming part of Eckersley Trust’. This acquisition
had been facilitated by the UTC being plugged into networks where key relationships are formed:

Were there other options? Yeah. There were a couple of other organisations that we probably could have talked to if Eckersley hadn't come about. But Eckersley had the edge because of their relationship with our governor and being a known quantity from that point of view, I think.

As a new academy, Will had been (discursively at least) an autonomous leader; free of the LA’s “bureaucratic” control. His autonomy in practice did not exceed the ideological limits of neoliberalism, which encouraged in him a relentless leadership of a school he liked to think of as ‘an education establishment that is being driven and directed by business’. Nonetheless, following the acquisition of his UTC by Eckersley, Will has been subordinated as a leader. There is now an Executive Headteacher hierarchically over him, parachuted in from Eckersley to resolve its operational problems. Will’s interpretation of this is influenced by the difficult experience he had in the UTC’s first year. He insists, for example, that the Executive Headteacher ‘is a good thing because we need that extra capacity’, and on the possibility of his being made redundant by Eckersley, he responds:

I’m open to it. My view was, and I got asked this by their director of secondary education, I don’t at all feel threatened because I’ve got to the point in my professional life where something had to change. And my view is that if my face doesn’t fit within Eckersley, I’ll take it on the chin and I’ll move on.

The acquisition is thereby depictable as salvational: Eckersley has saved the UTC from public failure and probable closure; Will from professional burnout; and the UTC brand from contamination — BDT being, in Will’s view, concerned with ‘making sure it’s just good news that’s coming out the door’. These data demonstrate one way in which the tension between a marketised “system” and the political and educational need to avoid market failure can be reconciled: these near-failures are instead opportunities for entrepreneurial and ambitious MAT CEOs to acquire millions of pounds’ worth of assets in land and often renovated buildings. Not only is failure averted, but the market is strengthened through the use of its technologies to achieve it.

Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence is useful for thinking about the ways in which power is being operationalised in the school-led system, revealed in Will’s account. Symbolic violence ‘allows force to be fully exercised while disguising its
true nature as force and gaining recognition, approval and acceptance by dint of the fact that it can present itself under the appearances of universality’ (Bourdieu, 1990: 85). Will’s story exemplifies the misrecognition of the imposition of an arbitrary set of conditions which finally subordinates him. For Bourdieu:

... to say that certain agents recognize the legitimacy of a pedagogic agency is simply to say that the complete definition of the power relationship within which they are objectively placed implied that these agents are unable to realize the basis of that relationship... (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 14)

So, it is not universally or historically the case that school leaders’ exercise of head/principalship may be thus interrupted; that leader rendered a deputy; the process be understood as salvational and that schools be re-branded and re-launched. These are specific conditions made intelligible to and normalised amongst actors in the field through a market logic whose conditions are partly maintained through misrecognised symbolic violence. In inviting Eckersley to take over his school, Will shows the ‘largely below-conscious complicity’ which James (2015: 101) argues is fundamental to Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of subjugation.

The “excluded”

Like Phil, Bridget has several characteristics which position her as near-elite. Although her school is not an academy, as a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school it is jointly governed by the Catholic Church and the LA. Her school’s faith status constitutes a successful brand (Courtney, in press), whose benefits to her own symbolic capital as headteacher are reinforced by her long-lasting and successful leadership there. Moreover, she leads a teaching-school alliance. Nonetheless, she lacks the social capital demonstrated through elite contacts, and so does not qualify for courtier status. She is quite certain that that makes a difference:

Steven: What kinds of school and school leader are tending to be on those teaching-school councils?

Bridget: Ones that are very pally with Mr Gove, if you want my honest opinion.

Bridget is in direct competition with Sykes for high-status contracts in the region, but her perception that insider status is privileged over expertise and experience
leads her to conclude that ‘it’s developing into the most corrupt system that I’ve ever known in education’. Below is Bridget’s account of the bidding process that prompted her conclusion; I have altered some elements in order to maintain her and Eckersley Trust’s anonymity.

The teaching schools were asked to apply to be a science hub of expertise. And I think probably our reputation for being a leading school for science and the support we’ve done I think is national. There are very few comprehensive schools like us, and we’ve done considerable school-to-school work with our SLEs. So we thought that perhaps this should be something that we should go for because we’ve got all the credentials. So I put in an expression of interest and didn’t hear anything. And two schools rang me up to ask me if I’d not applied. And I said ‘yes, we have’. And they said, ‘we’re on the short list; we thought you’d not applied because you were better than us and you’re not on the short list’. At which point I wrote a three-page letter to the DfE to say, ‘why aren’t we on the short list? Or I’m going to take it higher? To the Secretary of State?’ At which point, we ended up being on the list for the next stage, and that appalled me. It shouldn’t be that because you write a letter, that you end up on the list. And the other people on the list had had the regional training for writing the bid or whatever. Had a day. We had a webinar. And we had an interview. And I knew we weren’t going to get it, but I went ahead for the interview, because I knew that it would be Eckersley Trust. This was just one example that I was involved in where it was a stitch-up from day one. And there’s no transparency. It’s an odd, it's grace and favour now, not on merit at all.

Bridget interprets this as a performative invocation of due process, a cynical manipulation of democratic processes to legitimate the expansionism of the preferred bidder. For her, it means that the badges and statuses she and her school have acquired are not universal currency: they might position her advantageously in the eyes of many (see Coldron et al., 2014), but not, crucially, in those of the political elite, whose own networks ultimately produce and name the winners and signal openly to the losers that this is happening. Bridget’s leadership skills and the symbolic capital of her amassed statuses do not allow her to progress beyond this point and step over the glass cordon into the courtiers’ VIP area where social capital is the entry criterion.

Bridget’s experience offers a case where symbolic violence must operate differently because misrecognition is impossible — Bridget is not complicit in the operationalisation of power. Since, unlike Will, her subordinate position to Sykes cannot be assumed, he is ‘obliged to win and endlessly rewin the social
recognition that PAu [Pedagogic Authority, or arbitrary power] confers from the outset’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 20). Importantly, having no established basis for doing so, and in the manner experienced by Bridget, this is achieved through ‘usurping the direct or inverted appearances of legitimate practice’ (p. 20). However, in openly engaging in questionable practices, the underlying power relations of dominion become visible and open to challenge.

**Leading in a courtier’s empire**

These data reveal that powerful regional elites are coming to structure what is possible as a school leader and to define and embody what is meant by successful school leadership. Their appearance is a product of the confluence of a number of elements, including the disposition and means to benefit from a sympathetic policy context where new actors are being sought to adopt established, corporate technologies for removing the state from education provision; and the renewed importance of elite networks in devising and enacting policy. Their origins as education practitioners and leaders in the maintained sector both legitimates them in the field and belies their adoption of these corporate strategies and identities in order not just to play the modern school leadership game, but to win convincingly at it. Consequently, it is school-led MATs’ CEOs and teaching-school leaders who look set to play a significant role in the next phase in the replacement of local authorities in their school-support/improvement role here, and who provide a case study of how similar policy agendas may play out internationally. Those who applaud this development as at least a “pause” in the corporatisation of English education provision are mistaken: these MAT CEOs succeed because of their facility with corporate discourse and practice: they engage in mergers and acquisitions; obtain high-status contracts to deliver regional services in return for economic and symbolic capital; and perform (and sell) a form of system leadership constructed as superior. Success in this form of corporatised leadership privileges reach over quality; growth is about *expanding* rather than *deepening*. The neoliberal project to transform the very souls of actors in the social world into calculable, calculating entities (Ball, 2003) appears to have succeeded, the most successful contemporary embodiment of corporate leadership residing not just in incoming business people, but in transformed school leaders themselves.
The analysis presented here is significant in understanding new challenges those leading schools face. Whilst changes to how heads position themselves and are positioned owing to the encroachment of the corporate field onto the educational are well documented in the literature (e.g. Grace, 1995; Thomson, 2005; 2009; 2010), what is new is how such changes are being produced through the widespread imposition and impact of corporate organisational structures exemplified by the expansionism discussed here and embodied in elite actors. In other words, headship has for a long time been ‘risky business’ (Thomson, 2009: 1), but those risks have not previously included to such an extent the activities of competitors made strong through the apparatus and technologies of neoliberal structural reform. In explicating the risks to heads and headship in 2009 for example, Thomson was able to conceptualise federations and federating as a possible structural solution to the problem of headteacher workload. What is revealed in the chapter is how the effects of schools coming together under one CEO is part of a new and growing problem for headteachers’ agency and subjectivities. This chapter has presented only three of the myriad positions possible, but what is clear is that leaders attempting to do leadership in someone else’s empire are inevitably positioned such that not only are their practices constrained, but the policy construction of leadership as agentic and all-reaching is shown to be untrue. Bourdieu shows us here the way in which education policy, as an instrument of pedagogic authority, has constructed the limits experienced by a majority of leaders out of another, elite group’s hierarchical, organisational and discursive supremacy, weakening rather than strengthening the system they are meant to be leading.

**References**


Chapter seven: Corporatised leadership in English schools

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Corporatised leadership in English schools

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Corporatised leadership in schools in England is being promoted through new actors and new types of school, these latter with corporate structures, values, regulatory freedoms and contractual arrangements with staff. Corporatised leadership is characterised inter alia by the promotion of the interests of business through the curriculum, school structure, learning materials and pupil experiences, and the adoption of business-derived leadership practices and identities. Corporate leadership produces and is produced through new actors – here, Chairs of Governors, the alignment of whose symbolic capital with the privileged corporate discourse increases their influence. The paper draws on semi-structured interviews with nine school leaders from a range of school types. The data were analysed using Bourdieu’s concept of fields to explore the cross-field effects of business/economics and educational leadership.

Keywords: corporatised school leadership; principals; governors; academies; Bourdieu; fields

Introduction

In this paper, I present findings from a study of school headteachers and principals to show that new, corporate actors occupying school-governor roles constitute a significant intensification of the 30-year project to corporatise school leadership in England. Principals’ accounts show that these governors influence leaders’ identities and practice through their economic and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1990), constructing these leaders as new, corporatised actors themselves, especially but not solely in the new academy-type schools which are proliferating because of the discursive dominance of neoliberalism, and which are often sponsored by these governors’ businesses. This exemplifies corporatisation, distinct from privatisation: where this latter concerns primarily the private-sector appropriation of public assets, corporatisation reconstitutes non-economic fields and relations as having the goals, practices, motivations

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and instincts of the private sector. These new types, through deregulation and ‘autonomy’, collectively create new spaces where corporatism and corporate actors flourish (Gunter et al. 2014). I exemplify this argument by drawing on data from a study of school leadership at a time of intensifying school-type diversification. This analysis illuminates one instantiation of the intersection of neoliberalism with education. The significance of this analysis, however, is international, owing to the worldwide privileging of the economy and its globalisation through market technologies and ‘policy entrepreneurs’ (Ball 2012, p. 38) who proselytise and profit from a commodified social order. The research presented here makes two principal contributions – analytical and conceptual – to the global conversation concerning what Saltman (2010, p. 1) calls the ‘movement to corporatize education at multiple levels’. The paper’s first contribution is through my socially critical analysis of this neoliberal project as an unfolding crisis of purpose and legitimacy in educational leadership. Regarding purpose, I argue that corporatised school leadership fulfils primarily the purposes of corporations, not children or the teaching profession, and that this matters. It works to shift economic and symbolic capital to economic elites (Apple 2004) through invoking children’s right to a good education, defined narrowly as one providing future access to corporations as workers or to their products as consumers (Saltman 2010). I further argue that these corporate actors’ legitimacy to do and influence leadership in English schools as sponsor-governors requires problematisation. What, for instance, does educational leadership mean when a right to exercise it is predicated on possessing capital?

My second contribution is to the theorisation of the relationship between business and school leadership using thinking tools provided by Bourdieu (1990). Field theory has proved useful to critical scholars in education seeking to explain the ways in which policies follow and reproduce particular and coherent logics (Lingard et al. 2005, Thomson 2005, Gunter 2012). Bourdieu posited that society comprises fields of, for example, religion or business; these are relatively autonomous, animated by and constituted of ‘relations of power and struggle’ (Bourdieu 1990, p. 87) for economic, cultural, social or symbolic capital. For Bourdieu, these struggles explain the dynamics of and reasons for societal change, particularly through his reconceptualisation of capital as exchangeable across fields, cultural advantage being translatable into economic, for instance, through its misrecognised rewarding in recruitment procedures for high-earning posts. Actors occupy different positions within the field and are ‘concerned to preserve or transform it’ (Bourdieu 1990, p. 89), nonetheless, fields produce embodied dispositions to act and think in certain ways – the habitus. Fields are historically contingent, transient and non-discrete; the spaces between as well as within are ‘sites of intense contestation’ (Thomson 2010, p. 14), partly because fields are hierarchised, with the economic/political subordinating those of cultural production (Bourdieu 1998). To
explain the instantiation of this phenomenon here – the domination of the educational field by the economic – Thomson argues that:

The government and economic fields require . . . the school system to demonstrate on a global scale the national ‘capacity’ and legitimacy of government. External agents in other structurally dominant fields (government, economy) have acted in order to harness the schooling field to their needs . . . via new forms of intervention, codification and steerage. (2010, p. 15)

This paper responds to Thomson’s (2005) call for a more thorough empirical foundation to developing Bourdieuan cross-field theory, and highlights not just the domination, but embodied colonisation of the educational field by the corporate. To explain this, I identify three mechanisms for cross-field transmission of discourse, practices and identities: first, the policy imposition of extra-field practices and roles; second, their voluntary adoption from the dominant, corporate field by school leaders desiring its symbolic capital; and third, the introduction of actors from this corporate field directly into the educational.

The development of corporatised school leadership in England, 1980–2010

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) built on the Education Act 1980 in changing and enabling changes in conceptualisations and practices of school leadership. It was significant regarding the market processes for which it legislated and the desirability of future market solutions that it facilitated, establishing the discursive dominance of neoliberalism (Ball 2008) and reinforcing and extending corporatisation as the normative paradigm for education leadership. Legislatively, its measures produced important ruptures with the recent past’s ‘half-hearted comprehensive education experiment’ (p. 186). First, it reinforced the 1980 Act’s principle that parents’ school preference should be considered, and that funding reflect pupil recruitment. Leaders were consequently cast as marketers of their school, and later, through performativity, of themselves. Second, it established Local Management of Schools, transferring the responsibility for much of the school’s budget from the local authority (LA) to headteachers, whose schools began their organisational and discursive reconstitution as businesses and who themselves were repurposed as CEOs. The obligation to budget prompted headteachers to draw on available resources; these were corporate and state-legitimated (Grace 1995). Third, ERA heralded new school types; the City College and the Grant-Maintained (GM) school. The independence of both types from the LA was important in establishing the space for alternative, democratically unaccountable actors to participate in school leadership through governance and sanctioned partnerships, particularly for City Colleges. Their corporatism was crucial: private-sector sponsors were to have a significant cultural as well as material influence on leadership there because
the then Conservative government held that the predominantly Labour-run LAs in the urban areas where City Colleges were to be located had been chronically disadvantaging children (Walford 2014). Invocations of rupture notwithstanding, Grace (1995) argues that the emergence of neoliberalism in England’s school leadership should not be seen as the imposition of an unwelcome system onto passive headteachers, but as an outcome of their agentic adoption of an apparent offer of increased autonomy. This appealed to their collective memory of the autonomy headteachers in England enjoyed in the early twentieth century, when heads were characterisable as ‘personal, powerful, controlling, moralizing and patriarchal’ (p. 11). Glatter (2012) too, paraphrasing Maurice Kogan, notes that ‘institutional autonomy was built into the system’s DNA’ (p. 561). In England, then, headteachers embody the school-as-institution, contributing to a historical susceptibility to corporatism in English headship, which is discursively transmitted through appeals to autonomy and status (see Thomson 2010).

New Labour drew on that susceptibility from 1997 when it targeted school leadership to deliver its reform agenda (Gunter 2012), which comprised broadly market-driven ‘solutions’ to educational ‘problems’, framed, following neoliberalism, largely functionally as deficits in individuals or institutions (Hall and Raffo 2009), but mediated through a ‘Third-Way’ policy framework. This ‘promised … more creative combinations of public, private and voluntary solutions, top-down with bottom-up initiatives and professional engagement that did not extend to unrestricted licence’ (Hargreaves 2009, p. 15), although Gunter (2012) argues that in practice, corporate solutions and modes of delivery were privileged. For her, what ‘professional engagement’ meant for school leadership was not the opportunity to inform policy, but higher status within a hierarchical, CEO-modelled system in return for its delivery. Similar processes have been noted internationally where neoliberal reform has been undertaken (e.g. Eacott 2011). New Labour promoted corporate parity for headteachers, which did not mean equivalence, but rather that headteachers could and should demonstrate corporate identities and practices. Gunter (2012) argues that corporate identities were constructed by New Labour in five ways. First, through modelling and privileging corporate ways of doing leadership, particularly through commissioned research by the National College for School Leadership; second, through corporate-derived technologies of performance management and audit; third, through reculturing school leadership with corporate language. Fourth was through restructuring schools so that corporate partners invest expertise and money (e.g. Bell and West 2003). Further corporate restructures included mergers and acquisitions, branded as federations, which necessitated the new corporatised leadership role of Executive Headteacher, which along with later high-status roles such as National Leader of Education (NLE) rivalled LAs through their emergent systemic responsibilities. Finally, these corporate identities were reinforced through silencing or omitting opposition.
In summary, there has been a clear, strategic attempt by successive governments over the last 30 years to corporatise school leadership. The purpose, however, is fundamentally unchanged and reflects these administrations’ fears – replicated internationally – that England’s education system is producing insufficient numbers of appropriately trained workers for the globalised economy (Apple 2004). In the next section, I will outline the way in which the Academies Programme has accelerated this project and why this constitutes a new phase in the corporatisation of school leadership.

New, corporatised school types and actors: the Academies Programme

There have been numerous post-ERA state attempts at supply-side interventions in the quasi-market of education provision with corporate partners, whose involvement is constructed as philanthropic and salvational (see Saltman 2010). The roots of the most successful of these academies lie in City Colleges. Andrew Adonis, New Labour’s ‘tenacious midwife’ (Ryan 2008, p. 1) of the academies project, greatly admired their ‘high perform[ance] and . . . exceptional student academic progress’, which he attributed to ‘highly capable and effective governing sponsor-managers’ (Adonis 2012, p. 56). The way in which these private sponsors ‘ran their governing bodies in a businesslike way’ (p. 56, my italics) inspired Adonis to use the extant City College legislative framework for the academies programme, and the corporatism built into that model was strengthened in the 2010 Academies Act by the Conservative-led Coalition government. This sought to expand massively and rapidly the number and type of academy, leading to ‘a new educational landscape . . . [which] has developed with astonishing speed’ (Academies Commission 2013, p. 4). Corporatising features of that Act include the establishment of new types of academy, notably the University Technical College (UTC) and the studio school. Both of these represent a significant increase in the number of corporate partners with whom school leaders work and also in the scale and depth of their involvement. These types enable corporate actors to co-construct curricula; school hours and students’ work-appropriate attire reflect corporate life; corporate industrialists may deliver pedagogical content (rather than teaching) (Studio Schools Trust 2011, Baker Dearing Educational Trust 2014) and staff are easily dismissed, following corporate models (Courtney and Gunter 2015). What this means for leadership is that appointees to these new types largely reproduce the dominant discourse of corporatism. Furthermore, decisions about, e.g. structure, curriculum, staff pay and conditions do not solely reside with the Principal where there is a corporate sponsor (Wilkins 2012); in this sense, corporate leadership need not act through a designated headteacher, but can operate relatively unmediated. Other corporate features have existed since at least 2000, but have taken on new significance largely because the rapid expansion of academies (from 203 in 2010 to 4344 in December 2014, of which 1282 are sponsored (DfE 2014)) amplifies their effect. For
instance, an academy’s legal foundation is corporate – a contractual agreement between its trust and the Department for Education (DfE). Their particulars may vary; so then do the legal rights of leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. This heterogeneity is partly a product of the programme’s evolution (Wolfe 2013) and partly deliberately corporatising: ‘academies ... are predominantly being constructed as sites intended to enhance the growing influence of private versions of entrepreneurialism’ (Woods et al. 2007, p. 253), whose desired innovativeness presupposes the legal capacity to act differently from other schools. This is constructed through policy as a facilitative framework within which innovative, corporate school leadership is to flourish, not only through the partnerships described above, but also through growing numbers of education consultants (Gunter et al. 2014) and corporate actors on governing bodies whose corporate expertise is being actively sought (Wilkins 2014). Newly important is the extent to which this is meaningful through schools’ removal from the LA (Simkins 2014); and the way in which this corporate influence ‘may well be larger than simply governance’ (Gibson 2014, p. 1).

Research design

These findings draw on data generated as part of a study into school leadership of rapidly diversifying school types in neoliberal times. First, school types were mapped using primary and secondary sources. Second, this mapping was used to categorise the secondary schools in a large metropolitan area; leaders of 10 types deemed interesting or relevant to the study were evaluated, along with their schools, according to a set of type-specific selection criteria including the school’s Ofsted rating and popularity. Further criteria, such as the leader’s sex, were applied iteratively as the sample developed to avoid over/underrepresentation. Owing to the merging of two categories, nine school leaders (see Table 1) participated in three interviews of 60–90 minutes each over 18 months.

The data were analysed thematically; key and sub-themes were coded and memos attached to significant utterances. I identified corporatism as an important broad theme found in all participants’ data, and then identified sub-themes including those concerning governors, continually relating my emerging findings to the relevant literature and to the Bourdieuan notions of field and capital.

Corporatising school leadership

These data reveal that newly powerful corporate actors and a policy landscape which serves their interests is corporatising educational leadership in terms of leaders’ professional practices, identity, educational purposes, partners, ways of knowing and governors. Leaders of all school types are susceptible to this. Nevertheless, structures do make a difference; new academy-type schools
have more and closer corporate links and understand corporatism as a key brand element distinguishing them from LA-maintained schools.

All school leaders’ job descriptions have become more corporate through, for instance, outsourcing responsibility for school construction and maintenance through Private-Finance Initiatives (PFI) and reducing LAs to one of a number of bidders for school services. Funding deemed chronically insufficient and autonomous histories have obliged headteachers to seek corporate partners, ‘We’ve always, I think, since GM days, had a culture of bringing money into the school. And being very entrepreneurial in that way’ (Bridget). The reduction in LAs’ capacities since 2010 has forced new, corporate tasks on heads who have been encouraged to conceive of themselves more than ever as CEOs:

I had to create the pay scales for our non-teaching staff. I’ve had to build the structures for how the non-teaching staff are supervised and line managed. I’ve had to and am still looking at diagrams planning classrooms. Worrying about knowing how much money is being spent on electricity and gas. (Paul)

Some of the sorts of things I have to do is beyond what headteachers used to do . . . and . . . is more about being a CEO rather than a headteacher. (Phil)

Headteachers are not necessarily unhappy about this; their increasing expectation of autonomy (Thomson 2010) prompts an increased expectation of knowledge about their school’s functioning:

I think you actually feel more secure knowing where you’re at, rather than the sort of cloud that the LEA used to, you know, hide. (Phil)

But when they need help, it is often corporate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>School type – pupils aged 11–16 unless stated otherwise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Academy converter: selective grammar. 11–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazel</td>
<td>Community comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>UTC. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Voluntary-aided Catholic school. Teaching school. 11–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les</td>
<td>Federation of LA-maintained, cross-phase special schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod</td>
<td>Studio school. 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Free school: parent-led, comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Sponsored academy in a chain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We [are]... working with a ... serial entrepreneur, and he’s now developing a pack to develop an entrepreneurial resource as an alternative for careers education ... and he’s got links in the Institute of Directors. (Paul)

We’ve got perhaps a more switched-on company doing the financial returns, and that seems to have gone better this year. (Phil)

What is new here is not just the scope and scale of these corporate actors’ activities, but the fact that such tasks have become constituted as leadership. Therefore, leading is being done by corporate actors on behalf of or modelled to school leaders:

With some parts of the work-related programmes, we’re ... working on that with a company ... and they’re going to ... train our staff to deliver it over a year, but also for the first year deliver it for us. (Rodney)

Even non-academy headteachers are obliged to play the same game. Hazel, for instance, notes that a challenge of being funded through the LA is ‘working out the buy-backs that I want, just as though we’re buying into an academy system anyway’. New networks are being created where business links are valued and formerly important actors are stigmatised as part of an attempt ‘to reshape public education in ways that serve the interests of private enterprise’ (Gorski and Zenkov 2014, p. 2). This is misrecognised as modernising and is seen in Paul’s declaration that his free school is:

... part of a movement that is revolutionising education in this country, and I think education in this country has a lot of need of a revolution. I feel ... that the unions have held too much of a strong sway on the teaching profession for far too long.

This reflects a strong theme of mistrust and distance in the data between the leaders and (those representing) the led. For Rodney, the autonomy he has sought is from LA networks only:

A lot of the studio school depends on your links with business partners ... as an autonomous academy, it’s important that you are part of ... a network and it’s a very innovative network.

However, corporate partners’ interests outweigh those of leaders:

I don’t like the PFI. I don’t feel that I have the same ownership of my school as I did when I was just an ordinary VA head, where if I wanted to open it on Saturdays, I could open it on Saturday. (Bridget)

School leaders are refashioning their identities to make themselves more intelligible to and within the corporate field, adopting the language and dispositions of that habitus, whose symbolic capital exceeds that of the head-as-lead professional. This is strongest in leaders of new school types such as Paul; ‘I’m
a salesman. And I guess again this is where the free school bit comes in... I’m selling a vision.’ Phil conceptualises his selective school as a product:

We did this thing about, if we were a car, what kind of car would we be? And when you walk into a Mercedes garage, you don’t see lots of banners about this week’s special offers, you just see a Mercedes sign and you see Mercedes and you know exactly what you’re getting.

Hazel increasingly rejects identification with teachers, saying that ‘some of my own philosophies and values are probably a little bit more akin to that business world’. This is more pronounced in Paul; ‘Everything, everything we are, everything I am is a marketing decision.’ This exemplifies the way in which ‘[t]he expansion of neoliberal policies... produce[s] subjectivities attuned to neoliberal rationality’ (Slater 2014, p. 2). The dominant rules of the school leadership game are now corporate and to retain or earn symbolic capital, school leaders must play this corporate game.

As professional identities are corporatised, so are educational purposes and processes. All the academy-type leaders differentiated between what they saw as irrelevant or quaintly historical educational processes and objectives and those belonging to the modern, real world of business. Rodney was proud of his studio school’s ‘work with business partners to deliver curriculum challenges that are real’, and Will hoped that his ‘young people would have that... awareness of what the real world’s like from a commercial perspective’. Hazel made the same distinction; ‘I’ve got governors who run their own businesses... those people are really powerful... I need real-world skills really, here’. Corporate can be cut-throat: Jane said, ‘if my results are not good, I’ll be out of a job... This isn’t some kind of Victorian situation where they look after their employees’. The stigmatisation of the old (LA) extends to representations of its objectives: the ‘personal agendas’ (Jane) of LA governors are noted warily, but the corporate agendas of their replacements are not.

Corporatism commodifies, and so leadership knowledge is commodifiable. Even Bridget, who states that ‘the most important thing about this school is that it is a faith school based on gospel values’ observes that ‘I am probably the oldest head now in the Diocese... and I think that there’s a certain wisdom that comes with that, and I think that’s something that often, younger people want to buy into’ (my italics). This follows Saltman’s (2010, p. 22) analysis of corporatism, where ‘knowledge becomes discreet [sic] units of product that can be cashed in... rather than thinking of knowledge in relation to broader social concerns and material and symbolic power struggles’. Consequently, school leaders are reconstituted as consultants. Since the New Labour era (1997–2010), certain headteachers of high-attaining schools have thereby accrued sufficient symbolic capital in the field to play an increasing role in system leadership through, for example, the High-Performing Specialist
School programme (Bell and West 2003); federations (Chapman et al. 2010) and NLE status. Since 2010, teaching schools and their networks have been the preferred vehicle for school-led system improvement. As the Head of a teaching school and an NLE, Bridget is both an elite consultant for whose services schools may bid and the manager of such bids from the network for those members of her staff accredited as Subject Leaders of Education (SLE). This corporatised way of leading has proved so appealing as to be replicated voluntarily; ‘We’ve got Diocesan Leaders of Education, now, we’ve got a school-to-school support structure based on the teaching schools, the NLEs, the SLEs’ (Bridget).

Such cross-field interventions or effects have been theorised using Bourdieu’s thinking tools. Rawolle (2005, p. 714) identifies a sort of ‘structural effect’ whereby ‘interrelations [between fields] are “written into being” and then acted upon as if they currently existed’. Lingard et al. (2005, pp. 767–768) argue that purposive cross-field effects are central to education policy, ‘where the effects of policy processes in bureaucracies, in the form of texts, statistics and practices, are intended to have impacts beyond the educational policy field’. Thomson (2005) explores the conditions under which cross-field effects may occur and, like Lingard et al. (2005), concludes that globalisation underpins these, representing and producing ‘a synchrony of crises within the economic, political and educational fields’ which enables ‘direct intervention via policy’ (Thomson 2005, p. 750). This process is identifiable in these data, where an approved corporate identity – the consultant – is re-packaged as an NLE and imposed through policy on the educational field by powerful state actors with an economic interest in so doing. The considerable symbolic capital accorded to N/SLE status and its consequent replication follow years of such political interventions, which have shifted habitus such that gaining capital in the game of school leadership increasingly requires corporatised identities, tools, dispositions and ways of knowing. This Bourdieuian interpretation of Ball’s (2008) ‘ratchet effect’ of policy shows how corporatisation is ‘naturalized’ (p. 185), whereby the corporate is made common sense through headteachers’ agency and sense-making as much as their compliance. For example, for Ellen, school success is indicated through expansion, following the corporate model. This goal is possible only if she converts to academy status:

As a result of [new academies opening locally], exclusions have gone up . . . but . . . it’s only a 70-place PRU. So for me, that’s why I probably want to become an alternative provider and . . . expand.

In other cases, conceptualising the school as a business is the only way to understand it as a modern, progressive endeavour:

That drive for improvement, that business aspect of it, if you like, if we ran ourselves purely as a business, and you looked at the gains all the time; all the
marginal gains we want to make in order to make us a more successful organisation, more sales, or whatever it is, well ours is results with kids. (Will)

This facilitates corporate practices regarding the disposal of teachers (Courtney and Gunter 2015):

One of the members of staff that’s no longer with us, came out he hadn’t read his contract when he got it. So from a professional competence point of view, it’s incredulous . . . You know, so, more fool he! (Will)

So far, I have raised imposition and voluntary adoption as mechanisms for translating practices and dispositions from one field to another. Here, I propose a third; the direct introduction of actors into a new field – here, educational leadership – whose existing actors are disposed to recognise newcomers’ symbolic capital owing to the purposive, political alignment of their fields through prolonged periods of crisis. This builds on Thomson’s (2005, p. 754) interpretation of cross-field mechanisms, whereby agents such as headteachers are ‘multiply positioned’ and so bring into a field rules from a different (bureaucratic) game through their habitus. In my analysis, rather than finding themselves in multiple fields where they bring to bear experiences from both, agents enter a new field. This boundary crossing is possible only following a sustained period like that described by Thomson above, where ‘NPM [new public management] as discourse and . . . administrative mechanism created strong homologies between fields’ (p. 753). Where Thomson identifies NPM as an administrative conduit for homologies, I am proposing that it is here embodied in the habitus of corporate actors moving directly into the field, which is predisposed through the administrative mechanisms described to accept them. It has been suggested that these actors are likely to be multi-academy trust sponsors (Gunter 2012, Higham 2014). My data show that this is happening, but not necessarily at the board level, whose members’ egregious corporatism allows Jane to position herself differently:

The [sponsor’s] board has a disproportionately large number of people who are private business, and particularly finance. And . . . their focus on bean counting could potentially get in the way of school improvement. (Jane)

Jane’s rejection of this corporatism permits her to misrecognise her own. For instance, she ‘put all the middle leaders . . . onto the leadership pay spine, [which] meant that they were not tied by the 1265-hours contract of a main-scale teacher’. Such practices are enabled by the corporatism of the sponsor’s board which she rejects.

These data show that sponsors acting as governors, not as trustees on the board, embody corporatism directly within the field of school leadership. Governance has historically been a variously powerful vehicle for introducing alternative perspectives to school leadership (Grace 1995). Wilkins (2014)
describes how recent governance policy has followed the turn to corporatism in legislating for the self-governing school (whose governors are consequently accountable financially and educationally), and promoting the development of corporate skills in governors and the recruitment of corporate governors:

You don’t want to be tripped up because you’ve fallen foul of company law. (Phil)

Those increasingly prevalent activities which now constitute leadership, such as tendering for bids and delivering outcomes in a competitive, performative context mean that these corporate governors are valorised in schools of any type:

One of my governors, for example, works for [large IT company]. You don’t work for [them] and know everything there is to do about the IT world and be on the HR side of it and so on without having a really useful and very forceful presence. (Hazel)

Probably [I’m looking for] just business. I think somebody out there who’s in the enterprise world would be interesting. (Phil)

Academy sponsors are consequently corporatising school leadership through taking roles as governors. Higham (2014) argues that ‘ownership, through a CLG [company limited by guarantee] allows governance to become an additional and direct lever through which those with the capacity to do so are able to mould state education in their own interests’ (p. 417). Will shows how, through governors, corporatism is to permeate all aspects of his school, distancing it from teacher-based knowledge and practices:

If we don’t have that level of [business] involvement we’ll end up being an education establishment that thinks it operates like a business, rather than an education establishment that is being driven and directed by business.

These effects are more likely in new school types where the corporate sponsor is, or appoints, the chair of governors. Educational leadership is thereby corporatised in five main ways; through embodiment, recruitment, investment, curricular and pedagogical influence and symbolic capital. First, principals’ accountability to a corporate sponsor is embodied in the principal–chair relationship and routinised. Second, these corporate sponsors recruit principals and steer their performance through appraisal systems. This means that these principals share, or claim to share governors’ dispositions:

The founders appointed me because, when they interviewed, I was the one that resonated most with what they were aspiring the school to be. And probably
was able to vocalise things that they couldn’t vocalise but knew they wanted. 
(Paul)

Third, as sponsor, the chair invests in the school. This may be through providing 
materials, pupil learning experiences or staff training, and is particularly 
important in UTCs and studio schools because their ‘programmes are very 
expensive . . . to deliver’ (Rodney) and attract no additional funding:

Because of who [our chair] is, he’s in a position whereby he’s got a charitable 
foundational and it’s, he’s in a position to turn round, and if we needed a six-
figure donation, he could quite easily do that, a seven-figure donation if he had 
to. (Will)

Fourth, especially in studio schools and UTCs, sponsors co-construct the cur-
riculum to align its processes and outcomes with the corporate objectives of 
producing workers for the globalised economy. This curriculum may be ‘delivered’ by unqualified staff, who may come from partnering and/or spon-
soring industries. Delivering is not teaching; it is a corporate process where 
‘there’s a sort of knowledge transfer going on between [the deliverer] and 
the students. And he doesn’t teach them as such: he’s training them and 
showing them skills, and so it’s a different dynamic’ (Will). The principal’s 
role as lead professional is consequently eliminated: Will’s leadership of 
this industrialist is not education-based, and to gain professional as well as 
 hierarchical superiority over him, Will must re-fashion himself in these 
same corporate terms. Finally, corporate chairs’ symbolic capital is high; con-
sequently, they establish the rules of the game and principals are invested in 
playing:

There used to be opportunities to do job-shadowing thing, didn’t there? And I 
might talk about it with the trust partners. Because I think there are things we 
could probably learn from the way some big organisations actually work. 
(Phil)

Where principals are experienced, like Rodney, ‘the extent to which governors 
really have an influence on what’s going on is maybe less than people think’. 
However, Will, in his first principalship, is susceptible to adopting his chair 
of governors’ dispositions:

So my chairman . . . is very, very impatient, which is probably why he’s ended up 
being as successful as he is. . . . I wish I was like that . . . I need to be more like that 
. . . And it’s going to need me to be relentless.

Will’s corporate actions are validated, ‘if I decide to make a decision which is 
quite punitive towards an individual or a member of staff, I get support straight 
away’. The failure of his attempts to act in a less ruthless manner has propelled 
him increasingly towards corporatism:
I perhaps gave some staff a little bit too much rope . . . whereas our businessmen were much earlier ‘You need to go. You need to go, you know.’ And now, having had my fingers burned in the last half term, I’m much more of that view. (Will)

Dispositions producing success in the corporate field are seen as unproblematically analogous to those in education and include characteristics such as impatience, whose commonly held negative associations are reversed according to the corporate logic. Redefining language is part of this project; ‘I think a lot of people use the word commercial almost like it’s a swear word in the public sector’ (Paul). Educational leadership has become a field characterised by reversals of meaning and alien dispositions, and risks unintelligibility to those being led.

Conclusion
Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of private-sector interests on a range of aspects of educational leadership, including values (Thomson 2010, Courtney and Gunter 2015) and purposes (Eacott 2011, Gunter 2012). Others claim that little has changed in most leaders’ practice (Francis 2014). These findings suggest that concerns are justified: even where no corporate actors operate in a school, its leader is susceptible to adopting corporate dispositions voluntarily to gain symbolic capital in a field initially corporatised through policy interventions. The corporate habitus is consequently seen in leaders’ identities, practices and choice of stakeholder. Corporate actors are sought as governors even by maintained-school leaders, or come as part of the sponsorship deal for new types of school. Their high symbolic capital means that any leader will listen to them; in newer schools, they have considerable power to recruit like-minded leaders, manage and shape their performance, influence the curriculum, transform pedagogies and recommend teachers’ dismissal. Many headteachers manage these governors as heads always have; however, new types of school mean more inexperienced principals are more dependent for economic and professional support on these corporate actors.

This intensification in corporatised leadership has implications for three areas. First, for theory: this paper demonstrates empirically three mechanisms for transposing dispositions across Bourdieuan fields. Most important here is the introduction within school governance arrangements of corporate actors, made possible by the prior imposition of corporate field conditions by policymakers and the subsequent adoption by leaders of the corporate habitus to gain symbolic capital (see also Coldron et al. 2014). Second, for policy: developing a form of school leadership characterisable as ‘impatient’ and ‘relentless’ has been a largely successful policy goal. However, it assumes that this would produce educational and, in neoliberal discourse, national economic benefits. Whilst successive governments have re-
positioned the debate so that these benefits are understood as only those liable to ‘improvement’ through such corporate practices, it is increasingly clear that whatever ‘educational’ gains may have been produced are not translating into better economic or social conditions for young people who have experienced this leadership. Third, there are implications for leadership practice. Corporatised school leaders adopt dispositions from a field which mistrusts teachers, who embody ways of knowing and doing which are increasingly distinct. Little in contemporary corporate leadership speaks to notions of professionalism, an ethic of care and trust. This demonstrates a profound dissonance between the leaders and the led, a crisis of legitimacy and purpose in educational leadership. Using Bourdieu’s thinking tools enables motivational as well as mechanistic understanding of this: capital is at stake, and these findings document the struggles undertaken to gain or retain it; to win where most lose; where the economic increasingly dominates, and increasingly favours the already capitalised. This has not yet fully played out: educational leadership is becoming ‘edu-franchise leadership’, where the decision to lead certain, successful new school types rests on a potential franchisee’s business evaluation of the brand and on constituting an acceptable financial proposition to the franchisor (Career Colleges Trust 2015). Unsurprisingly, pupil selection is returning in covert and overt ways (Courtney under review); risks to corporate outcomes – i.e. pupils’ attainment – are handled according to a paradigm speaking more to management controls than common schooling. Even as globalisation is revealed as a race to the socio-economic bottom for those outside an elite, the educational leadership field is overwhelmed by the corporate because here, Bourdieu’s suggested exchangeability of capitals is easy. Economic capital – through sponsorship – may buy leadership, or symbolic capital. Corporate actors may convert some of this back into economic capital through providing paid services (indirectly) to the school, or they may become a franchisee or franchisor of a school-type brand like careers colleges, or they may simply use their symbolic capital to remain players in the educational leadership game, structuring and culturing it further to suit their interests. Corporatised leadership, then, like intra-EU monetary union, expedites the transmission of capital rather than being an end in itself. Mainstream political consensus remains strong here: shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt, proposing a new business-validated Leadership Institute should Labour be elected, confirms that the flow of capital will be two-way: ‘By working together we can ensure all schools, all children and all businesses benefit from the top quality leadership needed for head teachers to manage effectively’ (Hunt 2015, n.p.). Here are echoes from history: as with the National College (Gunter 2012), leadership is to become corporatised through a monolithic, business-driven institution of knowledge production. Just like last time, it is unlikely that dissenting voices will be invited to participate.
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Note
1. Leaders of new school types in England are often termed principals to distinguish them discursively from headteachers in maintained schools.

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Chapter eight: *Get off my bus! School leaders, vision work and the elimination of teachers*

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Get off my bus! School leaders, vision work and the elimination of teachers

STEVEN J. COURTNEY and HELEN M. GUNTER

In this paper, we argue that school leaders are removing those who embody or vocalize alternative conceptualizations of educator. It seems as if Collins’ call in his 2001 book Good to Great to get the right people on the bus is being taken very seriously by school leaders seeking to raise standards. This is achieved by eradicating ‘inadequate’ teaching, and implementing the leader’s ‘vision’, which we argue consists in silencing and potentially removing professional voice, knowledge and contributions. We present data from nine headteachers who talk about their vision and vision work, and in deploying Arendtian thinking, we think the unthinkable about how teachers can be rendered disposable and are disposed of. Arendt’s political thinking tools help us to consider how, through routine practices, current models of school leadership enable totalitarian practices to become ordinary.

Introduction

Our investigation into claims and evidence about how students’ learning outcomes can be improved has generated a shocking realization: we are witnessing in England the normalized acceptance of dismissing teachers (e.g. Stubbs, 2003), with contract termination for newly qualified teachers (Lepkowska, 2012) and early retirement for experienced teachers (Yarker, 2005) who do not meet mandated performance practices and demands for the speedy delivery of national standards. For example, Bob Hewitt tells the story of resigning after 30 years as a teacher because he refused to write lesson plans in the prescribed way instructed by school inspectors, and his story concludes ‘and one thing’s for sure: they cannot run gulags on their own’ (Hewitt & Fitzsimons, 2001, pp. 2–3). What we have identified is that such incidental evidence is coming into the public domain in different locations in the media and research outputs in ways that needs our attention. Such stories indicate that leaving the job is different from workforce turnover and requirements for quality, and is linked with the modernization agenda based on neoliberal ideas about the integration of the workforce with business owner requirements. Those
contracted to manage the business are deliverers, and to do that they need to contract those who can deliver. The popularization of Jim Collins’ (2001) business model of getting the right people on the bus and in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus has spoken to those charged with implementing what Ball (2007) identifies as the rapid modernization of the state in a competitive and globalized market place. In this paper, we engage with how school leaders as local managers embody and model whom the right people are, and how they articulate this through their vision. Those who are different, or do and say things that are different in ways which contradict these leaders’ vision for the school, or those whose practice is judged as not raising standards sufficiently or speedily, are being removed. No official data-sets are available to examine the scale of this, and no project has set out to systematically examine teacher removal, but recognition that it is an emerging feature in the literatures (see above), combined with our evidence, suggests a trend that is becoming normalized and needs to be brought into the public domain for recognition and scrutiny.

We begin by examining this emerging situation in public education and we use the example of England to illuminate the changes that are taking place in western-style democracies. We then inter-relate vision and vision work to this, and show the problematics of visioning. We then read our data through this lens, where we open up for scrutiny how visioning is being conceptualized and enacted. We ask some tough questions about visioning as a control process, and we draw on Arendt to identify totalitarian tendencies within the discourses of professional practice. Warnings about this exist from, for example, Gunter (1997), and particularly Angus (1989), who wrote:

> Principals and administrators, in the belief that they are maintaining traditions of strong and effective leadership, may cross the boundary between the advocacy of a particular vision or value system and the exercise of arbitrary power. (p. 77)

We suggest that what is new in the current context is the inter-play of five elements and our socially critical analysis of these. First are the increasingly unequal power relations between actors in the system—the policies we are analysing require a workforce which is disconnected from traditional sources of legitimacy and authority including professional codes of practice and signature pedagogies. Second is the operationalization of these relations through visions, which are fabrications whose goal is the local enactment of ideological policies seeking to raise standards. Third is the expression of these power relations in overt punishment for ideological non-conformity, which is increasingly lauded as best practice and misrecognized as leadership. The erosion of professionalism means that teachers are subjected to a regime of rewards and punishments, where punishment may mean disposal. Fourth is the impact of new types of school, independent of the local authority (district) and authorized to set pay and conditions for staff, which facilitates structurally and legally the disposal of teachers. Fifth is the speed with which this culture of disposability has become normalized in English education discourse and practice; this,
recalling the rapid rise of some totalitarian regimes, is a reminder that no system is safe from these threats to professional identity and employment. Our intention is to put changes in school leadership and Arendtian thinking side by side to generate important perspectives about public service reform. In doing so, we make an empirical and conceptual contribution to the field, where our data and their theorizing present new and troubling insights. We suggest the need for this type of scholarly activism within the school leadership field, particularly as it gives recognition to Bauman’s (2000) claim that ‘there is no choice between engaged and neutral ways’ (p. 216) in juxtaposing thinking tools and data.

From good to great?

Gray and Streshly (2008) applied to public education Collin’s (2001) prescription for improving business: ‘the researchers found that the key to these companies’ success was their CEOs. They also found that the CEOs of the successful companies exhibited certain specific powerful characteristics and behaviors’ (p. 3). In applying this to successful school principals, they present eight characteristics including the ‘unwavering resolve to do what must be done’ (p. 6) concerning results. Connected to this is a set of behaviours where decisions about practices come after the identification of the right people to deliver. Collins (2001) argues that great leaders know how to ‘get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats’ (p. 41). In Gray and Streshly’s (2008) terms, ‘the great principals learn to manipulate their systems in order to gather the right personnel to do what must be done at their school sites—despite often confronting overwhelming bureaucratic obstacles’ (p. 7). They celebrate how, through their visits and interviews, they identified how ‘highly successful principals (had) almost fanatical strategies for getting the right teachers for their school, eliminating teachers who did not fit with the vision or focus of the school, and only then making decisions about the way to go in moving their schools to greatness’ (pp. 7–8). The language used is about getting the right people and getting rid of the wrong people, where barriers from unions and professional codes of conduct can be removed through exercising ‘latitude to hire and fire’, being ‘selective’ and ‘persistent in getting people’ (p. 131).

This approach to what business calls human resources that need management is a strong feature of public education systems. The focus on the headteacher or principal regarding performance appointments and outcomes is located in the school as an independent or autonomous self-managing and increasingly self-governing business-as-provider in a competitive market place. For example, successive UK governments have pursued this policy in England through creating various forms of site-based management. Local management of schools (LMS) from 1988 enabled local authority (LA)-maintained schools to assume the responsibility for hiring and firing staff based on formula funding and the exercise of a parental preference for a school place (see Gunter, 2008). Schools established outside the LA created new forms of independence
through City Technology Colleges, grant-maintained status, academies and free schools, and new curriculum brandings such as studio schools for vocational education, and where agreed terms and conditions of employment could be disregarded for localized pay deals and contracts (see Gunter, 2011).

New Labour from 1997 pursued a policy of workforce remodelling where investment was made into non-teacher roles (e.g. school business managers, teaching assistants and administrative staff), and where PricewaterhouseCoopers (DfES/PwC, 2007) advised that the person leading local educational provision need not be a qualified teacher but could come from other parts of the public sector, or the private and voluntary sectors (see Butt & Gunter, 2007). This generated questions about professional identities and boundaries, where non-teachers began to adopt the duties of qualified teachers, and the acceleration of the academy programme from 2010 has seen the appointment of unqualified people into teaching roles (Gunter, 2011). The combination of local terms and conditions of employment with a widening of the pool from which staff can be appointed has dealt with concerns that teacher performance could not be handled without cumbersome processes, lengthy professional development programmes and union obstruction. The principals of new types of schools are enthusiastic about such changes (see Astle & Ryan, 2008), where Daniels (2011) gives an account of searching the country to get the right people onto the Petchey Academy bus. While the profession had a poor reputation for high workload levels, not least in ways that affected recruitment and retention, the shift towards performance-related pay and individualized inspection grades meant that business management would attract the right type of people who could deliver the right type of outcomes. The profession was characterized as replete with people who either did not care about the right things and hence had to be removed (see Stubbs, 2003), or who were constrained by unnecessary professional codes and cultures and so needed freeing up to be able to deliver effective and relevant learning outcomes (see Barber, 2007).

The impact of this on the profession has been studied through focusing on the influence of business management structures and cultures on teachers and teaching in national systems, and global trends connected with neoliberal strategies and managerialism (e.g. Ball, 2003; Compton & Weiner, 2008; Eacott, 2011; Galton & MacBeath, 2008). What has not yet been fully examined is how such processes produce forms of state-sanctioned disposability of teachers: this is more than dismissal based on incompetence or early retirement. Mostly, only a few cases come to light (see Gunter, 2005) such as Yarker (2005), who not only recounts his own story of leaving teaching but through a case of his daughter’s school illuminates how headteachers are complicit in deprofessionalizing practices. What we are concerned with is how the performance regime of high-stakes testing in combination with local independence of schools is actually getting rid of people off the bus. Gunter with Hall (2013) present a case study of Birch Tree Academy where just 25% of the teaching staff and 50% of the support staff remained from the predecessor schools. This was seen as a positive move by the principal:
I absolutely 100% knew that I was not taking all them shit people out of the predecessor schools ... I wasn’t prepared to have them because I know that if you give me two rusty sheds at the bottom of the garden and excellent people, I'll give you a school. You can’t give me a building like this and crap teachers, the kids will wreck the building.

Researchers have identified the increased personalization of responsibility to improve test scores by headteachers that this quote illuminates (e.g. Whitty, Power, and Halpin, 1998), and the impact of the Ofsted inspection regime on language and practice (e.g. Courtney, 2014; MacBeath, 2008; Perryman, 2006; Woods & Jeffrey, 1998). However, those who focus on the relationship between leadership and school effectiveness and improvement have uncovered and accepted the disposability of headteachers (Stoll & Fink, 1996), but retain the focus on headteacher leadership without examining the relationship between successful leadership and the getting rid of teachers (e.g. Day et al., 2011). They emphasize capacity-building regarding how teachers learn to change and adopt new ways of teaching and assessment (e.g. Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998), and accept the distribution of leadership to them as both necessary and empowering (e.g. Harris, 2008). However, our evidence shows that the situation has changed rapidly, and previously assumed benign processes of vision and mission are being used to remove teachers who are declared incompetent.

Visions and visioning

Official policy texts developed by successive UK governments and educational organizations in England are replete with notions of vision and visioning, and these have intensified over time. Such interventions present a sense of agency that fits with the traditional autonomy of the headteacher in charge of my school, but also renders headteachers as middle managers in the delivery of external policy reforms. For example, Ofsted—the non-ministerial government body responsible for, inter alia, inspecting schools in England—has shifted from insisting that leaders ‘realise an ambitious vision for the school’ (p. 38) in its 2009 framework for school inspection, to a requirement by 2012 that inspectors evaluate ‘how relentlessly leaders, managers and the governing body pursue a vision for excellence, for example, through … the extent to which staff, pupils, parents and carers are engaged by and contribute to realising the vision and ambition of leaders’ (Ofsted, 2012, 18—our italics). This shows an expectation that the vision derives from leaders alone, who must pursue relentlessly its realization by all stakeholders in the school community. What sort of leadership, in the sense of persuasion and influence, can exert such a wholesale change in everybody within the organization by such relentless means? We suggest that it is not what is understood as educational leadership which is being called for here, but a form which generates concerns about the removal of professional discourses with the potential for productive dissent. Studies of headship in England show that it is increasingly risky (see Thomson, 2009), where positioning in relation to the complexities and intensification of reforms results indicates strong trends in compliance (Gunter & Forrester,
2009, 2010), and while headteachers ‘work to advantage their school and students, what they do—their agency—is always framed by a decision about whether they are prepared to play to their own positional detriment’ (Thomson, 2010, p. 17).

The spaces where the interplay between such calculations about agency and structure are located are increasingly squeezed and difficult to challenge through professional learning. The National College for Teaching and Leadership (formerly National College for School Leadership) has sought since its establishment in 2000 to provide the sole way of knowing what it means to think about and do leadership (Hopkins, 2001b). There is a wide range of (password-protected, and often undated and hence timeless) online support resources to promote this leadership under the heading, Good Practice for Leaders. One typical article is called Creating a Vision and states that a vision:

should involve and empower individuals, promoting buy-in from the entire organisation. Vision should inspire everyone to aim for and achieve common goals. (National College for Teaching and Leadership, n.d., unpaged)

This is one example of scores of similarly deliberately decontextualized policy texts produced by the National College that exhorts the need for vision and legitimating vision work (see Gunter, 2012), with a preference for relentless leadership. In a report commissioned by the College, Hill and Matthews (2008) insist that effective National Leaders of Education ‘focus relentlessly on the quality of teaching and learning, inclusion and raising achievement’ (p. 52). Similarly, in guidance for governors in urban schools selecting and guiding a new headteacher, the National College (2005) asserts that ‘the effective urban head cuts through the complexity to reveal the real priorities for the school, articulating a clear, compelling and realistic vision of success. This clarity of vision underpins a relentless focus on the actions needed to deliver’ (p. 42, bold in original).

The production of such policy texts and practices (e.g. state-designed and endorsed training and accreditation programmes, see Gunter, 2012) is located in knowledge production that cuts across a range of researcher groups. Those who work in leadership and management (Davies, 2005), improvement (Hopkins, 2001a) and effectiveness (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000) accept and exhort the need for vision and vision work. For example, in scoping and promoting The Self-Managing School, Caldwell and Spinks (1988, 1992, 1998) present leadership underpinned by vision and the building of commitment to the vision. Other writers have promoted vision through the articulation of transformational leadership as the most appropriate model for delivering change locally (Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, 1999). Here, the job of the leader is to inspire and command individuals to feel that they belong to and can sign up to the leader’s view of where the organization is going and what this means for their professional practice (see Gunter, 2001).

The construction of this vision and vision-work discourse has a number of elements: first, that the objective is always high attainment in the school as a unitary organization, whereby examination results along with
inspection grades and league-table positions are used as proxies for standards. Second, a leader-centric culture constructs the headteacher as a functional leader, who does leading and exercises leadership and who is causally responsible for such outcomes. Third, headteachers as leaders have agency through direction setting, charismatic command of loyalty and commitment, and through the right to manage others’ attitudes, activity and performance. Fourth, this agency is exercised through formulating, communicating and enacting his or her vision, which is employed or invoked to motivate staff.

Visionless leadership constitutes poor or absent leadership. Such a discourse is evident in the rituals of vision work such as keynote talks to staff, students and parents, symbols on websites and within the school; strategic planning and key development policy and bidding texts; and day-to-day activities such as walking and interacting in corridors and classrooms, setting agendas for meetings and engaging with teaching and learning as vision-informed enactments. So vision work is idealistic and practical, inspiring and deliverable, controlling and enabling.

Requiring researcher scrutiny is the dominance of vision and vision work and its relationship with relentless leadership in the form of the personal responsibility for student outcomes—you lose your job if examination results are inadequate. The operationalization of vision work and consequently what it means to do leadership has changed—it is no longer discursively even necessary to invoke collegiality. Visions are the property of leaders, who should enact them relentlessly and are authorized to have them enacted by their objects, who are all other actors in and within the sphere of schools. No limits are placed upon this agency because where pupils do not attain highly or make good progress, it must be attributable to deficits which, whilst not all originating in the school (e.g. poverty, low aspirations) are all presented as remediable through appropriate school-centred activities. (Many deficits, however, are located through policy texts in the school, e.g. poor teaching and/or leadership). If responsibility for deficits of any provenance is to be located within the school sphere, then heads’ agency must be recognized or constructed as sufficiently extensive to effect the necessary change, or for their failure to do so as being their fault. Consequently, the scope of their agency includes the power to dispose of those who cannot commit to, openly contradict or unsatisfactorily perform that vision. Hargreaves and Harris (2011), for instance, in presenting research commissioned by the National College, report that a local councillor described how the ‘shared vision is about having ambition and nurturing the aspirations of our young people. Although the levels of deprivation might be high, that’s no excuse for low attainment’ (p. 46). Raising issues about learning and seeking alternatives would be interpreted as recognition of rival visions within homes, classrooms or staffrooms; there is only one vision to be delivered.

Relentless leadership consisting in vision enactment tends to dominate during those times of high-stakes accountability which Smyth (1989) explains are a result of periodic economic crises in western capitalism which are displaced into crises of the legitimacy of its institutions, especially education. Social and economic failures become remediable through
enacting strong leadership in schools, whose (standards-derived) truths dominate discourses not only of attainment, but of social justice and equity (Connell, 2013), following the logic, we are giving children better life chances if they get these grades. Vision enactment requires not even the façade of consensus, and so need not be a leadership activity at all, in the sense that followers need be induced to participate; change is mandated through authority. This underpins many of the claims made about strong, effective and successful leadership and much of our data.

Creating a vision is consequently a misrecognized activity that distinguishes those in positions of hierarchical authority and termed leaders for discursive purposes from other workers in school, and legitimates authoritarian activities and mandated change:

Although, on the surface, AH and NH appeared to be transformational leaders who consulted people about their clear and powerful visions of how the school should change, in reality they used these visions to drive people forward relentlessly down a particular path ... (Busher & Barker, 2003, p. 62)

Without this invocation of vision, the misrecognition of authoritarianism as leadership is impossible. It is this phenomenon—the increasing promotion and effects of authoritarianism masquerading as leadership through vision work to serve the reform agenda—which is our focus.

**Troubling visions and visioning**

The normality of vision in the policy, researcher and professional lexicon, and its need to be spoken and used makes any critique problematic. For example, we may question what is problematic with this type of statement: ‘vision helps schools to define their own direction and to develop an attitude that says we’re in charge of change’ (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p. 51). Concerns have been raised about operationalization, importantly by those involved in making reforms work as policy intellectuals (e.g. Fullan, 2001; MacBeath, 1998; Southworth, 2005), but beyond the functionality of making change work there is little fundamental critique. Visioning is seen as a benign approach to getting externally determined work done, but it is not usually interplayed with theories of power, where manipulation and indeed the removal of staff who challenge or have legitimate rival visions as experts in pedagogy and subject knowledge is not usually confronted.

Critical and socially critical work examines how professionals do their job and how this relates to wider power structures that generate advantage and disadvantage (see Thomson, 2001, 2009); this has enabled questioning about knowledge production within and for the education leadership field (e.g. Gunter, 1997, 2012; Gunter, Hall, & Bragg, 2013; Thomson, 2008). An examination of the power processes underpinning the formation and purposes of transformational and visionary leadership has prompted concerns about authoritarianism with its emphasis on simultaneously separating and connecting the leader from and to a range of followers (see Allix, 2000). However, we would like to raise concerns
generated by our data about a trend towards something more worrying, and hence in our paper we would like to interrupt visioning and vision work by challenging both purposes and practices.

We plan to do this through deploying Arendt’s historical and political analysis about totalitarianism. After all, Hitler and Stalin both had visions and did vision work, and rendered people disposable through war and mass murder. The details are captured in Gunter’s (2014) account of how Arendt’s thinking is illuminative of our current situation. It is out of the scope of this paper to engage fully with Arendt’s work and her arguments in detail, and so we present the specific ideas that we intend deploying in our critical analysis of visioning.

Totalitarianism has four key features: (a) ideology; (b) total terror; (c) destruction of human bonds; and (d) bureaucracy (Arendt, 2009). Vision discourses and work in education demonstrate how all four of these are evident in texts and research findings. (a) Ideology: the creation and use of the fiction of the school as an independent, self-managing organization that can set its own direction through vision and vision work; (b) total terror: the use of data and/or required good practice to remove underperforming headteachers, teachers and others labelled as opponents, particularly through the rendering of publicly funded employment as surplus to requirements in an efficient and effective for-profit education market; (c) destruction of human bonds: the shared histories, experiences and the use of professional discretion to set agendas within teams and classrooms are shattered through individual performance regimes, surveillance and the need to succumb to leader control with reward and blame/shame practices; and (d) bureaucracy: organizations such as the National College act as a site for legitimizing preferred models of leadership, and give a veil of modernization and status capital for professionals who secure accreditation and acclaim.

The vita activa is about labour, work and action (Arendt, 1958). Labour is activity for survival; there has been a move to construct professional practice as labour based on a seemingly neutral language of targets and data, where ticking boxes and demonstrating compliance matters. Work is done when something is crafted and has the capacity to outlive its creator, and so building new schools and investment in training is illuminative of this. However, much that has been work (e.g. lesson preparation) has been restructured and recultured as labour through the delivery of externally written lesson plans and schemes of work. What is increasingly missing from education is action or the capacity to do something new, what Arendt (1958) calls ‘natality’, on the basis that how people engage with each other illuminates ‘plurality’ with different views and strategies. While visioning based on headteacher agency suggests forms of action, in reality this is a fabrication as headteachers have to engage in activity to deliver what they are directed to do, and are co-opted into the culture of modernization.

The vita contemplativa (Arendt, 1963) focuses on the capacity to think; through a study of the Eichmann trial, Arendt identified the banality of a person who never thought through what he was doing with a defence of following orders. In carrying out orders, Eichmann demonstrated
banality, and used labour and work to discharge his murderous duties. In rendering a whole group surplus to requirements, the Nazis made the unthinkable happen. Within public education, a catastrophe is unfolding through a banality of leadership, or what Arendt (1963) identified as ‘thoughtlessness’ rather than ‘evil’ or ‘stupidity’. Vision and visioning prevent a person from engaging with the world from another’s point of view: visioning is rendering trained and graduate professionals who do not fit to be rendered surplus as a means of opening up educational services to market forces.

In undertaking this analysis, there are at least two caveats to be noted: first, while Arendt argues that the conditions for totalitarianism are always in evidence, it is not inevitable. She argues that there is a catalyst that shows how those conditions come together, and our job as researchers is to reveal that. Second, we are mindful of the potential offence that could be caused by seeming to equate the Holocaust with changes in the school workforce. Following Arendt, we understand what is distinctive about these two events and time periods, but when we juxtapose them there is something important that needs our close attention. In doing so, we want respectfully and necessarily to ask searching questions about how professional skills, values and knowledge are being disappeared.

Research design

The data for this paper are drawn from an investigation of the leadership of new and established school types in neoliberal and neoconservative times. The starting point was to map the school types, especially those emerging in the last 10 years, and while this is a fluid landscape, we identified a total of 90 school types. We categorized these into nine meta-types and mapped all the secondary schools in a large metropolitan area. Where insufficient schools fitted the type, we extended the search geographically. Characteristics suggestive of typological distinctions are rarely discrete or incontestable, and so this number is subjective as well as dynamic, but what is clear is that a single legal construct—the academy—is being used as a template to build a wide range of new types of school including the studio school, university technical college (UTC), free school and alternative provision academy. As supply-side responses to the problem (conceptualized in market terms) of lack of choice, they each target a different sort of pupil, or market. The resulting lists of schools were filtered according to criteria which varied from the universally applied, such as not choosing schools rated inadequate by Ofsted, to the contextual and iterative, such as the decision to select only women-led examples of types in certain, latterly finalized categories to counteract any inadvertent gender imbalance as the headteachers confirmed their participation. From the resulting shortlist of around three in each of the nine categories, the first was invited by email to participate, moving to the second in the event of non-consent. Some desired types were merged or discarded at this stage, as the particular combination of features of participating schools rendered them obsolete. Finally, nine headteachers, or principals...
agreed to be interviewed three times over 18 months for around one hour each round. This feature was designed to capture any flux over time, an essential part of the phenomenon under scrutiny, and also to generate data on a different theme each time. The first interview round in May–June 2013, from which most of the data in this paper are drawn, sought through narrative enquiry to establish principally the career histories and values of these leaders.

The interview transcripts were fully transcribed and member-checked (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Our thematic analysis of the data, supported by using Arendt’s political thinking tools, help us to consider how, through routine practices, current models of school leadership enable totalitarian practices to become ordinary. So we turn now to examining what is new in this phenomenon and which requires investigation: what happens when visions fail to inspire and motivate all in the way promised under this cult of leadership; what happens when standards fail to rise in accordance with expectations; and embodied dissent troubles the claimed unity of means and method? Finally, what authoritarian practices are concealed behind and enabled by vision talk?

### Getting on and off the bus

Our findings demonstrate that headteachers as visionary leaders are internalizing and enforcing the standards agenda through their vision; that dissenting or non-conforming teachers are either disposed of, or their professional identities re-written such that what remains is unrecognizable and, importantly, compliant. We argue this illuminates totalitarian tendencies sustained by surveillance and data to enable disposability.

Those in senior roles in schools such as headteachers or principals accept the descriptor of leader who does leadership as their professional practice, and they promote the ideological fiction that they can and do legitimately engage in vision work and that it makes a difference. As
expected, assertions reveal that leaders conceptualize vision as a property they alone in the hierarchy possess, and that it and their belief in it underpin activity:

I have a very, very strong and well-defined vision of what I want this school to look like. (Paul)

I suppose being a head means to me, right now, is about having that leadership and having that ... vision and having that drive. (Ellen)

[I have] clarity of vision for what an education, a good education looks like. (Jane)

You just get a feel for what’s the right decision. (Will)

The founders appointed me because, when they interviewed, I was the one that resonated most with what they were aspiring the school to be.

And probably was able to vocalise things that they couldn’t vocalise but knew they wanted. (Paul)

If I believe something’s right, I do it. (Rod)

... there is also a large streak of this; ... I’m never wrong. (Les)

Having a vision that is convincing for others is key to appointment and sustaining that role. The acceptance of this demonstrates the power of ideology in generating a shared disposition and language from across a range of headteachers with different professional backgrounds. Following Collins (2001), it seems that these heads are the right people on the bus and in the right position as leader, and the key issue for them is how they ensure the school workforce are the right people.

Leaders establish through vision work the primacy of the standards agenda in the purposes of their school, and hence of education. Jane, for instance, reports a conversation with her staff following her appointment to a new sponsored academy replacing a formerly low attaining urban school: ‘What is the purpose of the Academy? Well, they thought it was about community cohesion. And I said, No, it’s not. It’s about raising standards for children’. Ellen similarly equates educational goods solely with outcome accreditation, ‘... if children are not leaving with qualifications, we’re doing nothing; we’ve babysat them ...’. This standards agenda is linked unproblematically to the needs of employers, ‘if we don’t teach problem-solving and solution-focused approaches to learning, how are we ever going to compete on a world stage?’ (Hazel).

For these leaders, good leadership is ‘being completely uncompromising and relentless about standards for children, I think is the reason why we’ve been so successful here’ (Jane). The adoption of the official purposes of leadership as performing persistence and ruthlessness helps handle the unremitting nature of the job. Its purpose is to effect rapid, continuous, purposive change and consequently a verb often used is drive (especially forward); ‘I’ve seen a different leadership style to Wilshaw’s work equally as effectively in terms of driving people forward’ (Will).
Here, Will is decrying what he sees as the harsh methods of Wilshaw as Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools, whilst reinforcing the idea that workers must be driven by leaders. He repeats this idea when talking about his own practice, saying ‘I’ve never been work-shy, and that I think has also helped me drive it on’. Jane speaks of her sponsor’s ‘expectation that you would drive a coach and horses through what had gone before to deliver better outcomes for children and the only measure was outcomes for children’. Here, drive has taken on an even stronger meaning; she has a mandate not just to change, but to destroy what was there before. She too characterizes her leadership in the terms ‘driving things forward’. Hazel says ‘I put in the roles at middle leadership that I really know can drive things forward’. The activities related to leading are characterized through such language as relentless, quasi-mechanical and de-humanized.

All the respondents construct and pursue their vision in an authoritarian rather than collegial manner, though some are more comfortable with admitting it than others. At one end of this continuum are those who report exercising authority unilaterally, e.g. ‘and we decided at that time, well, I decided at that time …’, but prefer to invoke an illusory consensus; ‘because it can’t be that one person thinks that, it has to be… a consensus within the school’ (Bridget). At the other end are those like Paul, who is explicit about his control over the school: ‘… if you’re wanting to work at [this] school, this is what you’re buying into’. Similarly, Jane expects to exercise total control over her staff and grounds her authority in the reform agenda:

Here are the teacher standards, this is what you’re expected to do, you’re not doing it. So, I’m going to give you some time to do it, and if you don’t, then it’ll be conduct, then it’ll be capability, then there will be consequences.

So leadership is about the giving of a warning designed to correct conduct; if this fails, the next stage is to train teachers into the required capabilities; if this fails, the teacher will face unspecified consequences as a euphemism for dismissal or contract non-renewal. The standards agenda encompasses teachers as well as pupils; the performance of the former becomes measurable as a product of the latter, and is expressed as universal, undeniable truths. The performance assessment of teachers has the effect of distancing Jane from her role as lead professional whose role is to articulate a contextual interpretation of appropriate practice. She is instead an enforcer of extrinsically derived and validated competencies, and minimum standards that change continually (these are floor targets, where the percentage of children in a school reaching a particular standard such as 5 A*-C grades keeps rising as governments seek to improve quality). Challenging this, raising alternatives and knowing about what is going on is construed as opposition to the leader’s vision, and is consequently constructible as contrary to universal notions of good practice and what works, a theme we identified elsewhere in the data: ‘I’ve never ever, in all my time teaching, ever known anybody who wants to be a worse teacher, who actively says, I want to be worse’ (Bridget). Dissent, in this context, is unthinkable.
Historical studies of headship show that forms of autocracy are very deeply embedded in the education system in England (Grace, 1995) but our data say there is no pretence of disguising absolute power. Many of these heads articulated their position and role as one of regal power:

And it’s, you know, the King is dead, long live the King. (Jane)

... you sort of almost begin to feel a bit like the Queen. (Paul)

I think whatever happens, you’re King in your own school, aren’t you? (Phil)

And unaccountable power:

I think as heads, we’re all a bit megalomaniac. (Phil)

Even concepts of leadership meant to invoke participation, such as distributed leadership, are re-imagined such that what is produced is a sort of omniscient, ubiquitous leader, ‘I think it really is about having this distribution throughout, being accessible at lots of different levels’ (Hazel, our italics). What is being distributed is not the leadership, but the leader, where the will of the leader (or Fuhrer) is known and enacted. For some, the territory they wish to control extends further than their own school—theyir ambitions are quasi-imperialist:

I’m no longer satisfied with having an impact in this community. I mean I do believe that our education system is letting down hundreds of thousands of kids every year. And I think somebody needs to say something about that. And I want the opportunity to start to have that sort of a voice. (Paul)

Importantly, the acceptance and promotion of a crisis in education combined with a salvation narrative enables vision work to be credible to the self, to identity and to the right to have a voice in ways that confirm the crisis and its solution.

Totalitarianism works through a range of human technologies, not least surveillance. Leaders monitor staff performance at all levels continually, and while much activity occurs (walking around, watching, listening and studying data), in Arendtian terms it is a form of labour as a means of survival. First, senior leaders who surround the headteacher are monitored to ensure they are communicating and enacting their leader’s vision correctly: ‘... I will monitor all the time whether the two Assistant Heads in charge of teaching and learning are really truly taking the message through’ (Hazel). This is especially so across the federation where Les is the executive head, ‘we meet regularly now as an SLT, every single week. They’re minuted, they’re actioned, so there, there’s monitoring’. Surveillance is both facilitated and concealed by state-mandated bureaucracy; performance management processes, for instance, reduce the complexity of teaching and learning to obedience to and proselytization of the vision of high standards:
The first [performance management] target is on general compliance ... The second one is quality of performance ... The third one is pupil outcomes ... what percentage of your pupils have made expected or better progress? ... Target four is about contribution to the vision. (Paul)

Task delegation happens within this paradigm of tight control, and is misrecognised as distributing leadership, where Jane is able to say ‘... and I think the ability to step back and allow other people to take forward the agenda at the right time, once you’ve modelled it, once you’ve given it direction, once you’ve given birth to it, as it were, is key to it’. There is no hint here that the agenda taken forward is shaped by those people. Staff performance further down the hierarchy is also monitored continuously. Lesson observations are routine ways through which to categorize and know teachers, e.g. Ellen says that she puts ‘... a lot of accountability around teaching and learning, work scrutiny, lesson observations, etc.’, and Hazel states, ‘we’re still watching people teaching and we’re doing work scrutiny’. Therefore, performance concerns not only outcomes but also the micro-management of options, choices and decisions regarding feedback on exercise books through to feedback about teacher routines.

Tough messages are given to staff whereby the vision disrupts identities. Importantly, much of the early work on the necessity and benign role of visioning was about connecting direction with values. Much was written about enabling the profession to speak about what matters to them, and how their views about this in relation to the vision was a key process of contribution and integration (see Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). The situation has now shifted. Values do not matter, and indeed Arendt (1963) argues that values did not prevent Nazism, and neither did rational arguments. What is happening is the use of data and judgement labels to demonstrate a crisis in the school and/or in the person’s practice:

The predecessor school staff thought that the school was a good school. It wasn’t. So the first thing was to present to them... this is where the school is at, and this is where ‘good’ is. And there’s a massive gap between the two. (Jane)

And actually it’s the robust monitoring that, so for example, something came up on attendance, where it’s oh well, we’ve got practices right, and then actually when you see the raw figures, this puts [name of person] in a very difficult spot ... (Les)

Where staff are retained but are deemed problematic in their attitudes and articulations, leaders engage in activities which re-fashion identities to make them conform to the vision:

We've done a massive amount of work over five years now around teaching and learning styles. People here are, I think, well, they're used to change [laughs], cause it's just the way the school is. (Rod)

It is about, in some cases, changing people's embedded way of doing their job. But we've worked well at doing that. (Paul)
Or heads can eliminate dissent before it presents, by recruiting according to the vision:

... just before Easter we did our next round of teacher recruitment for September. I created a 40-page document that outlined the commitment; this is what you are buying into if you want to work at this school ... There are expectations that they teach in a certain way, and that's explained in the documentation. And we have an ethos and a vision for education that's explained in the documentation. (Paul)

Leaders, then, exercise control over their staff’s identities and practices by enforcing their vision through technologies of communication and surveillance operationalized by a combination of vision and data. It seems, moreover, that dissenting or uncontrollable teachers, or those whose practices fail to conform to the standards agenda, are disappeared.

One way in which leaders can dispose of teachers is through re-structuring the school. Ellen exemplifies this; ‘I'm just going through the re-structure where I've got people who've lost their jobs’. This is a curiously dissociative way of saying this, whose effect is to deny her own agency in carrying out the re-structure and removing people. Jane is more direct about her role in the process and its relation to standards:

... the question should be, what do we need to do to ensure that they [the pupils] do get it? ... And it was changing the language, it was changing the culture. So part of it was done with the re-structuring. And I was very fortunate in that the predecessor school had a number of acting positions, so I didn't have to transfer people into those roles.

Bridget, at the time of the first interview, was shortly to lead the takeover of another, less successful school, which she described as being one ‘that has been really dropping down from Good to Satisfactory to Requires Improvement’. Bridget uses the language of the standards discourse to promote the idea of continued deterioration and to justify her subsequent re-structuring, despite there being no drop other than semantic from satisfactory to requires improvement (the latter being the new term for the former). Importantly, she intends to thwart the TUPE (The Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment, Regulations) legal process for safeguarding staff when schools close and an academy is opened:

I think we've got a school where teaching and learning's not good enough, which is something that I'm going to have to address. And it's going to be where some people are going to just be expecting that if they sit there, they'll be TUPE'd over to this school. And so I think that there's going to be a lot of challenges in terms of competencies and redundancies.

Whilst re-structuring conceals the disposal of teachers within bureaucratic conversations about surplus roles, outright (constructive) dismissal, following capability procedures or coercion, is very much evident in our data. The headteachers interviewed were open about the extent to which the disposal of teachers is a legitimate tool to achieve school goals:
This is how it’s gonna be. You’re either on the bus or you’re off the bus. And if you’re on the bus, then we’ll do everything we can to help and support you. But if you’re not, then you’re off the bus. And that’s either through redundancy, through a restructure, through a change in roles, through a capability, through, ‘do you know, what? This isn’t the job for me, I’m applying elsewhere. (Jane)

So… you kind of like say to somebody, ‘look, I’ve got real concerns about your performance and I’m going to do something about it’. But I’m not saying, ‘you’re bloody rubbish, you need to get out’. You know what I mean? So it’s a much more professional but quite robust system, so you know, people have left already this year. (Les)

This is my vision, this is what I’m passionate about. If you don’t like it, come and talk to me about it. But I know what it feels like to be in a school where your values don’t match those of the organisation. And, I got out, so my challenge would be, this is what this school is about. (Paul)

It’s all about the type of people, the right people and chucking out what wasn’t needed and getting in what was. And in any school, if you ask any Head if they could change ten percent of their staff, they could make an impact somewhere. And it’s like football … if you buy the best players, you get some success. And if you don’t get some success, the manager gets sacked. And I think a lot of what happens in schools is a bit like that. (Phil)

Staff who have fought it [the vision] are being given the message that they’re not welcome here. (Paul)

Significantly, the banality of visioning is evident here, but unrecognized by the speakers. Through labour and work processes of competency and performance assessments, and contractual agreements, people are in or out. They are reduced to a label and dismissed:

There were so many people who were inadequate, the Local Authority knew they were inadequate, they were never gonna change; they’d been inadequate for years. And some people who should never have been allowed near children, let alone inadequate teachers. And they should never have been allowed to transfer to the Academy. And I spent 18 months, two years in one case, having to take remedial action. (Jane)

Whilst headteachers and principals of all types of school dispose of teachers, the ability of academy leaders to set their staff’s pay and conditions means that in these schools, the discourse is more intense and disposal is easy:

We do have one member of staff who we are going to sever contract with because they haven’t bought into the ethos … so we are making use of performance-related pay and our performance-management processes and the fact that everyone when they sign a contract signs up to a twelve-year [sic: he meant month] probation length of time with us … and I think that will be an interesting message to the rest of the staff. (Paul)

And quick:

Staff who in their first year have shown that they are not engaged with the school and they are not working with us and are not taking advice and guidance on how to improve, will be asked to, ahm, as I say, not return in September. (Paul)
There is no sense of taking action to discuss and create alternative approaches, to resist the removal of people who have a shared history with them as fellow professionals but who are now deemed surplus to requirements. Importantly, there is no sense of linking this with the deprofessionalization of the profession through the employment of non-trained people to teach (see Gunter, 2011). Interestingly, the very headteachers and professionals who are making this vision work are now facing criticism of doing an inadequate job (see Henry, 2012). What this illuminates is that whereas tyrannies remove their enemies, the shift to totalitarianism is when the innocents, who have done what was required, then face removal. Show trials in totalitarian states show how people accepted their guilt and punishment; it will be interesting how the headteachers speaking here engage with their own inevitable disposal.

Conclusion

Collins (2001) uses a seductive metaphor about getting the right people on the bus which aligned with popular contemporary business discourses concerning the efficient production of high quality, desirable goods and/or services. In that context, the quality of workers is one of many variables affecting corporate outcomes, and is susceptible to improvement first through a technology of managerialism which constructs those outcomes as quantifiable, and second, through the dismissal of staff to recruit instead the sort and standard required. What is problematic and novel is the effect of the transliteration of this way of thinking about leadership and outcomes to the context of schools and education. Once headteachers are appointed as the right people on the bus, their thinking is a form of banal leadership that focuses mainly on labour and sometimes work, but rarely action. Busy and overworked headteachers are immunized from thinking politically, and the ideological job that vision work does prevents recognition of this. However, the data suggest that the interplay between the vision of what to do and the people who will do it is more complex than Collins’ (2001) prescription. Heads appoint and remove people to deliver the vision, where changes to the vision are in the hands of those to whom they are accountable, a complex mix of their employers, sponsors, and—through legal contracts—to the government of the day (and its agents) in London. Hence, while visioning and vision work suggest a smooth technology, in reality headteachers find themselves in contradictory and tense situations, where visioning may reap rewards or it may not rescue them from disposability (Gunter, 2012).

Thinking this through using Arendtian analysis suggests that something very damaging is taking place, and we have identified totalitarian tendencies within these accounts: first, ideology—the standards agenda dominates what is meant by a good education in regard to work-ready skills and dispositions, and how pedagogies and curricula should respond through the vision with discipline through vision-work. The school as autonomous and independent is an ideological fiction that is used to support and enable visioning, and so controls imaginings about the
educational process and the place of the professional within this. Second, total terror—we have shown how dangerous it is to dissent or fail to measure up; it is not clear what inadequate actually means and so all are vulnerable to identification and denunciation. We would also emphasize how total a phenomenon this is. For what is happening to qualify in Arendt’s terms as totalitarian, the attitudes we describe should be reflected and reproduced outside the field of education. That this is indeed the case is exemplified by a question from the journalist, Andrew Marr (2012), to the Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw:

How do you get rid of the people that you want to get rid of, however? If you’re talking about a culture change, you’re talking about getting rid of people too. (unpaged)

Human disposal is a societally accepted and promoted organizational goal, going beyond the normal processes of hiring and firing which have historically refreshed and improved the skills and knowledge of the school’s workforce, to become a mechanism aiming instead at culture change. Such an environment enables Wilshaw in the same interview to respond that ‘... it’s about good performance management in schools, and up to now I don’t think it’s been robust enough and that’s something we’re going to look at much more carefully’ (Marr, 2012, unpaged), and for that response to be understood as correct, necessary and appropriate. We have argued in this paper that the de-humanizing effect inherent in conceptualizations of humans as human resources has contributed to this avowed readiness amongst school leaders to contemplate disposal as easily as, and in some cases more easily than, their training and development in order to fulfil organizational objectives. Enabling this totalizing discourse is vision work, which is a compulsory activity of educational leadership and consists in school leaders implementing relentlessly the ideology of standards, and misrecognising the external provenance and homogeneity of this mission as contextual, personal and unique. The third criterion is the destruction of human bonds; this is achieved partly through the use of labels, such as ‘inadequate’, which reduces both the complexity of educators’ activities, knowledge, skills and humanity such that the emotional work of disposal becomes manageable and the act itself banal. The final element is bureaucracy; the act of teacher disposal is concealed behind occasionally multiple organizational re-structures. Teachers are known and hierarchized through the data produced by their students’ performance in standardized assessments; through lesson observations; and work scrutinies. The names of those judged inadequate are invariably on a spreadsheet with the head, who is expected to take action against them. The objectivity of the measures evidencing, or constructing their failure is simultaneously undeniable and illusory.

Who, then, has found themselves off the bus and what are the implications of this for the profession? It follows from our analysis that those who raise questions about the standards agenda and have alternative approaches to assessment and accreditation constitute an important part of the disappeared; this is not simply an individual tragedy for those teachers concerned, but a collective one for the profession. Our findings
support Goodson’s (2014) conclusion that the state is purposively re-fash-
ioning teachers’ identities through the reform agenda such that experi-
enced teachers who have vocationally, ethically and professionally based
identities are purged from the workforce systematically in favour of pre-
dominantly younger practitioners who perceive teaching as just a job, and
are ideologically more inclined to accept the increasingly dominant dis-
courses of audit, performativity and standards. These leaders manage
education services in ways that we suggest has moved beyond panoptic
performativity (Perryman, 2006), to resemble more the totalitarian prac-
tices of complicit agents. The implications for the profession are clear;
this management of teachers such that the discursive dominance of the
standards agenda is sustained will lead to a profession consisting mostly
of those who believe, or who stay quiet. As the employment status of
teachers increasingly reflects casualization, which is a goal of neoliberal
agendas (Connell, 2013), so those who understand themselves as profes-
sionals are reduced to a labour market at the bottom of the hierarchy.
When combined with the personal notion of visioning, accountability to
those who endorse that vision through appointment (reward and dis-
missal) and the impact of new types of school whose legal status makes
employment more insecure, then the existence of public education done
in public and with the public is challenged. Sooner or later, following
Arendt, we suggest that this may not matter; as the recent spat between
Wilshaw and the then Secretary of State for Education in England,
Michael Gove demonstrates (see Adams, 2014), when the regime has
eliminated its opponents, it will turn on its friends. This could be inter-
preted as pessimistic; yet, there is much in our data to suggest this is a
legitimate position to take. However, in Arendtian (1958) terms, the
capacity for natality or to do something new is evident, not least that we
have identified totalitarian trends and not totalitarianism. Our contribu-
tion is therefore not only empirical and conceptual, but is also reflexive:
we have here taken seriously one of the responsibilities of socially critical
researchers to engage in scholarly activism through gathering evidence
and theorizing in order to illuminate seemingly dark times.

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References


Chapter nine: Corporatising school leadership through hysteresis

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Abstract

The research reported in this article builds on the established notion that schools are hierarchised through policy, thereby accruing differential amounts and types of symbolic capital, by examining the ways in which this process is reflected in the revealed habitus of the leaders of those new, privileged school types. The paper reports on findings from a study of school leadership in neoliberal times and uses Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis, or a dislocation between the habitus which formerly produced success in the field and the habitus currently necessary following a change in field conditions. I use crafted narrative accounts from a headteacher and a principal to argue that rather than simply being an effect of change, hysteresis may be an actively sought outcome whereby the state intervenes in a field — education — to deprivilege welfarist leaders and privilege corporatised principals through structurally facilitating their habitus and mandating its dispositions for the field. However, insofar as deprivileged actors may draw strength and an identity from their rejection of corporatism, the concept of hysteresis must be extended to include notions of agentic dissidence.

Key words: school leaders, Bourdieu, hysteresis, habitus, corporatised, welfarist

Introduction

For contemporary heads and principals in English schools, the field conditions which structure their practice and identity construction are increasingly corporatised (Courtney, 2015; Thomson, 2005). Some demonstrate the ability and desire to position themselves advantageously by playing the new game
following these rules, or lead schools whose characteristics are conducive to the accumulation of further capital (Coldron et al., 2014). However, for others, their dissonant embodied histories produce dispositions out of sync with those privileged in a corporatised education landscape. In this paper, I draw on Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis to explain and theorise this disjuncture between the welfarist (Gewirtz, 2002) school leader’s embodied dispositions, or habitus, and those of the corporatised school leader. Gewirtz (2002) termed this form new managerialist: my shift in nomenclature reflects the continuing development of leadership from a managerialist focus on its functions as a technology to a set of practices and policy dispositions located in private-sector networks operating to achieve corporate objectives for education concerning, for example, economic productivity (Apple, 2004) through ever-closer links with business and industry. I argue that the corporate habitus increasingly confers advantage in an educational leadership field which has been moved on through policy, and I explain through employing Bourdieu’s hysteresis how these corporate values and practices misalign with and subordinate those of the welfarist headteacher who is left behind. The relationship between the histories of these school leaders and the alignment or otherwise of their habitus with current field conditions is not co-incidental; capital in this new world is accruing to those who are accustomed to having it. Indeed, field conditions purposively represent their preferred and habitual practices and dispositions, which privilege or invoke innovation, autonomy and privatisation. In order to make these arguments and explain this dissonance in school leaders’ habitus, I analyse data in the form of two exemplar narratives from a study of school leadership in neoliberal times through the Bourdieuan lens of hysteresis. This paper makes two important and original contributions to the field: first, empirical — in thinking through data using Bourdieu’s conceptual tool of hysteresis to illuminate and theorise the way in which conditions are imposed upon the field through policy to benefit those already in possession of symbolic capital as entrepreneurial, corporatised school leaders. The second is theoretical: through these imposed field changes, hysteresis is no longer simply an effect of an out-of-sync habitus; it is the state’s desired outcome on those it seeks to de-privilege through its agentic reproduction of unequal power structures and reinforcement of neoliberal ideology. Further, the concept is here expanded to include notions of the dissenting habitus, adopted as a
source of identification and as a resource for leadership values. The study’s site is England, but this analysis speaks to researchers exploring these themes internationally, where similar neoliberal reforms are taking place from Sweden (West, 2014) to Australia (Eacott, 2011).

**Bourdieu’s concepts of fields, habitus and hysteresis**

Bourdieu (1998: 32) conceptualised social space as semi-autonomous, hierarchised fields, each being understood:

... as a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure.

In other words, whilst social agents may be commonly invested in a particular field, their aims and the capital they possess to prosecute those aims differ; the field is not simply a site, but ‘relations of power and struggle’ (Bourdieu, 1990: 87, emphasis added) constituting structures which reflect ‘the successful strategies deployed by field participants in their struggles to use their accumulated capital ... to occupy desirable positions within the field’ (Hardy, 2008: 138). As the quotation above illuminates, these structures in turn give rise to sets of dispositions to enact agency and think in certain ways; these dispositions are embodied in social actors as *habitus*. The field is consequently a product and producer of habitus; a reifier of historical positions and provider of tools for navigating the future, or a ‘generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices’ (Bourdieu, 1998: 8).

Fields are consequently in constant flux, transformable not just by the success of agents’ strategies within them to gain positional advantage and/or more capital, or by material changes within the field owing to, for example, demographics or new technologies (Thomson, 2008) but also by changes deriving from *beyond* the field. For instance, scholars have drawn on Bourdieu’s field theory to explain the domination of the education by the economic field in sites internationally where neoliberal policies structure understandings of educator and educational leader (e.g. Rawolle, 2005; Thomson, 2005, 2010).
What is illuminated in such moments of field synchronicity, or breach, is the way in which habitus formed in the corporate field provides a template and resource through embodiment and discourse for school leaders' habitus in the educational. Leadership practices, identities and characteristics deriving from this corporate habitus are privileged through, *inter alia*, policy texts, legal structures and discourse. The corporate habitus is also privileged by the mere fact of its promulgation by the already capitalised. Not all school leaders possess sufficient capital ‘to recognize (or assert) the desirability of new field positions’ (Hardy, 2008: 130). As Bourdieu notes: ‘it is the people who are richest in economic capital, cultural capital and social capital who are the first to head for new positions’ (Bourdieu, 1996: 262). Along with symbolic capital, Bourdieu understood that these forms of capital are exchangeable, where the bearers of what is arbitrarily deemed “superior” in each, and which are only so as a product, *not* a producer of these bearers’ advantage, influence the exchange rate between them and maintain their distinction through reproducing materially and discursively their objective distinction by means of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2010), whereby the dominated misrecognise their subaltern status as *the way things should be*, or doxa. The privileged dispositions of those endowed with capital lead to their engaging in practices, in what appears to be a natural way, that further benefit them. So, not only do they demonstrate “a feel for the game” through taking advantage of currently advantageous field positions, like certain of the ‘well-positioned headteachers’ in the study by Coldron et al. (2014), but they ‘master in a practical way the future of the game’ (Bourdieu, 1998: 80) through establishing structural conditions for future capital accumulation from which they particularly will benefit. Field conditions may also be changed by the state through law or policy, or by new technologies, where the newly disadvantaged may include even those who previously had the most highly valued symbolic capital (Hardy, 2008).

What this process highlights is the way in which the field is moved on in ways which disadvantage players in the game whose capital is insufficient or (newly) insufficiently valorised. There is a chronological element here, whereby the de-privileged habitus is left stranded, its dispositions out of sync with the new rules. Bourdieu called this effect *hysteresis*, where ‘the relative values of symbolic capitals are altered and the interactions between field structures and
habitual are dislocated’ (Hardy, 2008: 138). Although used relatively infrequently, it has proved a productive theoretical tool for exploring the intersection of policy, power relations, practices, identities and values. For instance, McDonough and Polzer (2012) employ it in order to theorise the effect of a regional state policy-induced change in the ‘taken-for-granted ways of being’ (p. 357) of a group of unionised public-sector employees in Canada, where, as in the case reported here, newly privileged or even mandated practices derive from a neoliberal reform agenda. Kerr and Robinson (2009) challenge scholars to foreground agency when theorising through the lens of hysteresis, as in their examination of Ukrainian workers’ active seeking of homologies between their outmoded dissident habitus and that required in the shift to a western-style corporate context. It is no coincidence that both these examples are locatable within a wider set of shifts conceptualised collectively through globalisation, where, according to Thomson (2005), the economic, political and media fields are implicated in a series of crises producing more-or-less coherent responses in policy and ideology, and which inevitably provide a challenge to those habitus formed under different conditions. McDonough and Polzer (2012) and Kerr and Robinson (2009) have undertaken crucial foundational work in this field, enabling issues to be addressed here concerning not just the ways in which actors understand and locate their agency, but importantly, the ways in which power structures are reproduced through state action, and hysteresis becomes not just an effect of dislocated habitus, but a desired outcome of symbolic violence.

The corporatisation of education and its leadership

Education is a field experiencing particularly intense flux. It, along with much of the public sector, is being rapidly corporatised through a series of ideologically neoliberal policies in response to crises in what Clarke and Newman (1997) have identified as the post-war political-economic, social and organisational welfare settlements. New corporate actors are taking on the responsibility for — and indirectly the profits from — providing, resourcing, servicing and governing in educational institutions; and co-constructing and delivering curricula and learning experiences deemed crucial to developing students’ preparedness for the “real world” of business (Ball, 2007; Courtney, 2015).
Much of this “modernisation” has taken place through the vehicle of leadership: headteachers have been responsible for ensuring the local delivery of reforms in return for higher status and pay (Gunter, 2012). This is easier to achieve where heads are “believers”; consequently, corporate actors increasingly have ownership of the modes of leadership preparation and development through, for instance, privileged corporate charities such as Teach First and Teaching Leaders, where corporate values such as entrepreneurialism are espoused. This turn to corporatism in leadership is discursive as well as embodied: it has been communicated to headteachers through normative texts and research commissioned by what is presently known as the National College for Teaching and Leadership (Gunter, 2012). It is also institutionalised, in two principal ways: first, successful headteachers may engage in mergers and acquisitions which enable them to take up roles as Executive Heads, or CEOs. Second, they may lead new types of school, based on the academy model, whereby corporatism is institutionalised through, for example, new governance arrangements with corporate sponsors and/or trust partners, independence from the local authority (LA), and freedom from statutory obligations concerning staff pay, conditions, and under the Coalition and Conservative governments, qualifications. Success in the field is increasingly corresponding structurally and discursively with the leadership of one of these new types of independent state school, including free schools. It is no coincidence that these are “independent”: their model is the independent, fee-paying sector where a successful and long-standing private structure and ethos are integral to its usefulness as a normative construct.

The study

The findings presented here are part of a wider study into school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux. I interviewed nine headteachers/principals of different types of school three times over eighteen months to understand how they conceptualised themselves as leaders and practised leadership in a fragmented “system” functioning through technologies of corporatisation and competition. The three interviews consequently had different foci: the first sought to reveal the participants’ professional biographies; the second what they thought it meant to do leadership in their
particular type of school; and the third to position their leadership in the wider landscape. This analysis draws on data drawn from all the interviews with these two leaders.

I used a narrative approach to generating the data from the first round, since ‘humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives’ (Cooper and Heck, 1995: 196) and consequently, my invitation for participants to recount their biographies resulted in their attempts at sense-making, post-hoc rationalisation and the creation of causal relationships between selected, chronologically meaningful events. In other words, and in the way identified by Bruner (1990), they use plot as ‘the narrative structure through which [they] understand and describe the relationship among the events and choices of their lives’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 7). I have constructed narratives from the data of two of these participants, following Polkinghorne’s (1995) definition of narrative analysis (which he contrasts with the paradigmatic analysis of narratives). Their stories are re-presented in a way that highlights the leaders’ positioning in relation to a privileged discourse which idealises corporate, innovative leadership and subjects that associated with “bureaucratic” local authorities to ‘discourses of derision’ (Ball, 1995: 260). I have added no biographical details, but have altered some to protect the participants’ anonymity whilst keeping the spirit and significance of the original. I have changed too the order of some utterances and added words to create a coherent, chronological story (the original narratives containing “flashbacks”). The stories are in the first person to retain the subjective foregrounding present in the original. This method has antecedents in studies by, inter alia, Pepper and Giles (2015: 47), whom I follow in calling the result ‘crafted narrative accounts’. The two leaders selected here represent exemplar, opposing positions within the spectrum suggested over the nine as a group. The participants were not evenly spread over this spectrum: Paul, as the principal of a newly opened free school, shares a considerable number of corporate characteristics with most of the other school leaders (see Courtney, 2015); in many ways, however, Les (executive head of a small federation of special schools maintained by the Local Authority) represents a dissonant case which I was keen to represent and to theorise.
Les’s story

I had quite a strange kind of upbringing, I guess. Not traditional. I was born in Glasgow, kind of shipyards, all the rest of it. My dad was an engine fitter and he got a job working on pipelines for oilrigs, so we all set off for Europe. I went to primary school in Belgium and Holland and Germany, and my parents just sent us to the local public school. It was just a phenomenal decision to have made. And I came back and did my secondary education back in Glasgow in a massive school. Exactly the same as the schools in later years I’ve taught in. In my year group, on today's measure of five or more A* to C with English and Maths, there were three of us who got it, and I’m still in contact with all three. And you know it was all very, very working class.

I nearly didn't get into university. My mother said, 'but I don't know why you want to do anyway; there's loads of jobs in the shipyard, just go down there. They'll give you a job tomorrow'. 'Yeah, OK'. Ah, but I saw everything. It was a truly comprehensive school. And I saw some very, very good people who are my friends, but had all sorts of difficulties and backgrounds. So it really was truly comprehensive. That kind of helped form my political philosophy, so when I went into teaching I was all about the underdog, and so I chose to work in a very rough school. So I stayed ten years there and progressed up to senior teacher. I knew that what I wanted to do was to stay with those kinds of children. But what happens when you're with those kind of children in those kind of areas, is, people come along and say, 'ooh, you're a rubbish school, let's close you'.

So anyway, that got closed.

Then there was a school in the east of the city which has its own little problems. By January, I was made an Assistant Head and by the following Christmas I was Deputy Head. In that school. And that's really what I wanted, because I was working with the children I wanted. So then I stayed there nine years, before they closed that one. Erm, and by that time, I was Acting Head. Then the Local Authority said, 'do you fancy working in this school? What it was really a kind of multi-faith school. So I thought, yeah, that'll be quite interesting, I'll try it. Didn't like the idea of it being good for behaviour. Which it was. And I was going to provide some kind of, because they were going through Building Schools for the Future' and amalgamation and all sorts of other things, just to provide some support for the leadership within school. So I signed up for a year. Loved the school. Loved the kids. Ended up being persuaded to stay for three years.

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* A schools’ rebuilding/refurbishment programme started under Labour and abandoned by the Coalition government in 2010.
Then at the end of that, just when we were settling in the new building, they said, 'will you come and, you know, do another year for us?' and I said 'nah, I've really got to get back to the kind of kids that I like'. You know, I love these kids, but I really like the kind of, the difficult ones. So, I said no, without a job to go to. And then I kind of just put it out there that I was looking for something. 'Cause you kind of build up links with people. And I had somebody rang me up and said, 'The Head of here was leaving, would I be interested in doing that?' So I've been here since September.

I attribute a lot of my career path to a teacher in that first job who said, 'your job is to civilise them'. I thought, 'who the hell do you think you are?' You know, were people saying that about me? You know, when I was at school? Because you had the whole lot. And people kind of mixed and did all those things that comprehensive education was about. So I think those two things linked, I kind of felt that I was on a mission, really. And I still do, with these kids. Because all of my children have a statement and a disability, you know, where the brain is not connected in the right way and they'll do some terrible things, but they're absolutely lovely children. And you know, my belief about society is, you know, I judge a society by how you treat people at the margins of it. And we don't treat them very well. I've always felt like the system's kind of, certainly back then, I think was, kind of stacked against those kids.

I don't ever want to work in an academy. The idea that the Local Authority can't say, 'there's some need for some education, let's put a school there' to me is just bonkers. They have a role to monitor the quality of education but actually can't do anything about it, well, that's just, just doesn't make sense to me. The Local Authority's got these schools in this federation through a very, very difficult time. They've been extremely supportive financially and every other way. And it just would have been a nightmare for the kids. So much of what happens in academies is based around the sponsor’s view of education. Well, what right have they got? So they have a particular view that does not coincide with mine. Fine. If mine doesn't coincide with the Local Authority, but the Local Authority has, you know, OK, they're not all elected members, but the elected members are in control of, and they're elected by the people. So they set the kind of the tone of what they want. Academy sponsors are not accountable to anybody!

Paul’s story

I went to the local bog standard comprehensive school. It was a big school. Split site, with all the associated problems of a mixed community. When it came to A Levels, the Head of Sixth Form said 'Well, Paul would probably do well getting a couple of A Levels, but afterwards, he should get himself a local job, and that's probably his
My parents, being ordinary middle-class people, accepted the teachers’ judgement of my capacity. Ahm, I didn't. We had a huge showdown at home and I refused to go back to that school and went to the local HE college. And that probably marks my turning point. Because I found myself sitting in A-Level classes with a single mum, who felt like education left her behind and wanted to start again. And I had a builder who wanted to do better as well. Sitting in that class made me realise that education wasn't a given, and I think I did better because of that.

When my tutor suggested that I think about university, I naively said, 'well, if I'm going, I want to go where they do physics the best'. And he said, 'then it's Imperial College for you'. They offered me the next-best thing to an unconditional offer, so I went. Had a fantastic time. But when it was over, I suppose I fell into teaching. Thought that, you know, it was a profession, I respected teachers, my parents were from a background where you respected professionals, and teachers were professionals. So, yeah, did my PGCE in London. I loved teaching, I loved the classroom. I'd found what I wanted to do, which was brilliant.

Got my first job. It wasn’t inner-city London, but it's certainly right on the edges; we had gang culture outside the school gates. It was a Catholic school, so we had kids doing Ouija boards in the sacred school hall, and the local priest doing his nut 'cause he then had to re-sanctify the hall. I got slightly restless, so I moved from there, heavily ambitious. I thought right, if I can do this, I can do anything! So I applied for Head of Science in my second year of teaching at a prep school. Because at that point I was getting a bit fed up with stroppy 13 to 16 year olds. So I thought, why not teach that younger end? 'Cause it's quite cute teaching the year 7s and 8s; that's nice! Got the job. Interesting school that, it was a for-profit school. So it had shareholders, and it was a different style of education because of that. The Head was very much constrained by the fact that if you spent money that would reduce the profit. So I quickly got out of that, and actually went back to being an ordinary science teacher, but this time in a boarding school, so I went for that job because it came with a house! Yeah? Free rent! Sounds good to me!

So, that's inner-city comprehensive, a really weird prep school, then boarding school. Had a fantastic time there. Few years there. Then I wasn't looking, but I saw a job come up that I had to apply for. It was a physics teacher at [well known independent] School. I looked at it and I thought, OK, we know about these posh schools, yeah, why not? Who wouldn't? Applied, and was absolutely gob-smacked when they offered me the job. So I then spent six years teaching there. At which point I realised what a boarding school really was. Because at a place like that, where the boarding kids are not allowed
to see their parents for the first three weeks of term to get used to boarding, you realise what a 24-7 boarding school is. It worked because it didn't give the boys a single minute to get bored. The toll it had on staff is huge. So that went fine at first, but I then started to feel slightly constrained, 'cause it was that all-encompassing thing. I had a child, who I wasn't seeing growing up. So I looked to move.

I applied for a Head of Science post at a state boarding school — my first experience of middle leadership. And of course being Head of Science, you're in the more senior echelons of middle leadership 'cause you tend to have a big team, a big department and a big budget. So that was good. Church school, so it was a voluntary-aided school. So it had its own budget, it was very much an independent, autonomous being, which is good, rather than LA-controlled schools. Fantastic time there. Got asked by the Local Authority to be a leading science teacher for the Authority. That gave me a taste for having a bigger impact, and I then started to get frustrated as Head of Science, that I could make changes to my department, but couldn't make changes to how kids were taught in other schools. In other departments, in other subjects. Then, the Head retired, and the replacement was the Deputy. And he and I didn't get on. So I looked to move. I also looked to promote, because at the time, it may be arrogance, but at the time I looked at the guy who got the job of Head and I thought, 'I know I'm better than him. Hm'

I was invited for interview for the post of Deputy Head at an independent school and was appointed. I spent six years there. The Head gave me responsibility for turning around the school's curriculum, basically, and gave me free reign. And that was a great opportunity because you had some incredibly intelligent members of staff who would challenge you, particularly if you're asking them to change successful practice. So I basically funded myself through a Master's degree to learn how to answer those challenges. Leading there was fascinating and frustrating at the same time because it was like trying to turn an oil-tanker. I then realised that a lot of my frustrations were because the Head was rightly saying it was my remit to change things, but she then still was acting as a bit of a brake on that. So at that point I thought, right, I'm ready for headship. I saw this job come up, and I thought actually, if you were to say to me, what would be my ideal job? I would say, 'give me a school without a history. Give me a school to start from scratch. I never thought there would be an opportunity. Before Free Schools, there has not been a brand-new school opened up in this country for at least 20 years, so it's always been like, no, no-one starts a school up. And then the Coalition comes along and says actually, yes you can! So, I applied, and it has just been an absolutely astounding experience.
I do believe that our education system is letting down hundreds of thousands of kids every year. And I think somebody needs to say something about that. And I want the opportunity to start to have that sort of a voice. I want to be the one at the front, going, 'there's something wrong here and we need to do something about it, and this is what I'm doing'. We need to shake up the system. And the free-school model is a way you can do that. And there's a lot of people out there particularly in education that are scared to look at free schools and see what we do, because they're scared it will challenge their hegemony. This idea of choice in education is something that's only for the better.

Privileging the corporate, and deprivileging the welfarist habitus

What the data in these accounts reveal is the way in which ways of being a leader and doing leadership, as well as the values associated with this, are hierarchised through the rules of the schooling game. In order for my use of hysteresis here to be valid and useful, I need first to show that these accounts reveal habitus which are conceptually and discursively distinguishable. Les’s account is one of struggle, where his route to executive headship is littered with structural impediments. His success in those schools whose pupils do not fit within a performative educational culture which rewards predictable and normal student progress is not only unrecognised; it is constructed as failure by Ofsted and the state as failing to reach notional “floor” targets, and the schools closed. Les embodies a leadership which draws on welfarist notions of public service and where a commitment to comprehensive schooling is evinced. Gewirtz (2002) identifies these and a number of further characteristics of welfarist leaders (as an idealised category). These include their undergirding values of social justice and equity; a foregrounding of collective employee relations through unions; and a consultative style predicated on cooperation rather than competition. Importantly, she argues that such leaders have been socialised ‘within field and [demonstrate] values of specific welfare sector, e.g., education…’ (p. 32). Some (but not all) of these elements are clearly identifiable in Les’ narrative, and what is strongest is his focus on equity and social justice for pupils, and on democratically accountable local authorities as the structural means to achieve those goals. This means that he is out of sync.
with the dominant field conditions; these are reproduced through specific vocabularies in policy texts and in Paul’s narrative.

Paul, too, was educated initially in a comprehensive school, but is quick to disavow it through criticising it for ‘bog standard’ quality and for its significance within a system where the public good of “choice” is denied to that public. The ‘mixed community’ in the comprehensive school lauded by Les as a sign of strength is associated by Paul with inevitable ‘problems’. What this foregrounds is the importance of narrative context in understanding habitus, where the mere fact of comprehensive schooling per se for both Les and Paul reveals little. For Paul, the transition to the independent sector is easy and rapid, after only a year in teaching. However, in order to legitimate his current advantaged position as a leader in the quasi-independent state sector, that first year takes on increased significance even within his narrative. So in his initial description, the school ‘wasn’t inner-city London’ and the worst behaviour he chose to relate comprised ‘Ouija boards in the sacred school hall’, but a few minutes later, it had become an ‘inner-city comprehensive’. Significantly, all his other experience bar one school was in the independent sector, and that one was a state boarding school; these exist in a liminal space between the two sectors owing to their unique (in the state sector) qualifying criterion of selection by ability to pay (for boarding) (Courtney, in press). Paul, then, locates his dispositions within a framework informed by independent-school values to the extent of highlighting the autonomy of the voluntary-aided state school where he worked. This allows him to position himself in a way which reproduces dominant corporatising discourses whilst attacking the straw man of the more visible, for-profit form. For instance, and in the way typologised by Gewirtz (2002) as the new managerialist leader, he draws from the discursively approved lexis to espouse sanctioned positions, e.g. concerning “autonomy” and “choice”, dislikes trade unions, and is committed to contractual forms of accountability where the contracts favour employer over employee rights:

Within our performance management structures, staff have three performance management meetings with my Deputy, where targets are agreed, monitored, assessed and then evaluated over the year. That then influences a discussion with governors about pay, but also their position within the school as a whole... Staff who in their first year have shown that they are not engaged with the school and they are not working with us and are not taking advice and guidance on
how to improve, will be asked to, ahm, as I say, not return in September.

Paul constructs democratic accountability as hegemonic and bureaucratic, antithetical to the competition which for him is the driver of improved outcomes. He also accepts the discursively allocated role of himself as leader, delivering improvements through vision work he alone is qualified or entitled to have (Courtney and Gunter, 2015). By way of contrast, where Les mentions “vision” not once in the first interview, Paul refers to it, and in relation to himself, twelve times. Where Les has succeeded despite his habitus, Paul finds the main features of his are highly valorised in a policy landscape where the independent state school, often with corporate sponsorship (Adonis, 2012) or with corporatised leadership (Courtney, 2015) is constructed as modern, innovative, and necessary in fragmented “systems” internationally (Chapman and Salokangas, 2012; Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Keddie, 2015). This model may be promulgated by Education Ministers of any political party claiming to occupy the centre ground, where neoliberalism is understood as normal and commonsensical. This normalisation of corporatisation, and its corollary, the stigmatisation of the public, is exemplified in a speech by the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove:

Look at the academy schools set up by one of the most admirable men I know – Phil Harris – Lord Harris of Peckham ... Every single one of the schools he takes over gets at least an additional twenty per cent or more young people to pass five good GCSEs compared to the record when the local authority ran it. Some get 40 per cent more ... Phil is able to support state education so generously because of his success in business. (Gove, 2011: np)

These data show that the habitus of these leaders are discursively distinguishable and that Paul’s, formed in and by the independent sector, aligns with contemporary field conditions through language and avowed practices in a way that Les’ no longer does. The field has been structured predominantly since the Education Reform Act 1988 to produce these conditions in England (Whitty, 2008) and so, in the way predicted by Bourdieu (1996) and demonstrated by Coldron and his colleagues (2014), it may be argued that leaders such as Paul, possessing sufficient capital and in the right form, have had the right sort of habitus to enable them to occupy privileged positions in the field as it is further corporatised by policy interventions. In other words,
such leaders have been able to ‘decipher homologies’ (Kerr and Robinson, 2009: 830) between their habitus and those required for success in a field where new, independent schools require leadership.

However, Bourdieu’s (1996) conceptualisation of hysteresis and its consequences on agents over-privileges the agency of better positioned actors who rush to profit from changed field conditions, and does so in a general rather than sufficiently specific way. I contend that this understanding of hysteresis takes insufficient account of the state’s intentions in privileging those bearers of approved habitus through its manipulation of specific fields via policy. The education field has not been altered such that any bearers of high amounts of capital may overcome the hysteresis effect to succeed there; it has been altered specifically to suit those endowed with certain types of habitus involving certain forms of symbolic capital where independence, innovation and entrepreneurialism are foregrounded. This is more than mere opportunism by Paul, permitted by capital he has accrued through doing school leadership per se; it is a form of symbolic violence enacted by the state on those leaders professing a public-ethos, welfarist habitus to create further, discursively and materially meaningful distinctions in the field. This interpretation is supported through a reading of Bourdieu’s other writings on the state:

The state is the culmination of a process of concentration of different species of capital ... It is this concentration as such which constitutes the state as the holder of the a sort of metacapital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders. (Bourdieu, 1998: 41)

An important theoretical contribution of this paper is to link this insight to hysteresis, thereby repositioning this concept as more than a neutral effect, but as the state’s desired outcome of subordination on those it seeks to deprivilege. Through this, the state may reproduce unequal power structures and reinforce ideologies. Here, this is achieved through creating in the state sector structural homologies with the independent sector that suit those already leading there or who have independent schools as a contributor to their habitus in some other way. The fact that this latter group comprises for the most part those from privileged backgrounds means that this arguably exemplifies the state’s transferral of capital to the capitalised. This capital takes multiple forms, including new school buildings for free school and academy leaders. This brings
a *brand advantage*, which may mean more pupils on roll along with the funding that accompanies them. Facilitating the structural and economic success of these schools in this way strengthens the position of their leaders, whose habitus disposes them as “believers” to enact neoliberal policies concerning, for example, unions, contracts, and performance management, as well as embodying the visionary leader conjured by the academisation policy. This is not to argue that all heads, to be successful, have to possess this habitus — my claim is that these embody the requirements for success most easily and thereby model to aspirant field leaders the necessary practices and dispositions.

So, merely creating a policy may conjure its protagonists in the field, gifting them a limited sort of agency whereby they enact the state’s definition of what counts as valid knowledge and practice there. As this group is strengthened, so another — the welfarist — is weakened; here, I contest Bourdieu’s assertion that it is only as a result of their finding their habitus misaligned with the field that their practices ‘incur negative sanctions’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 in Hardy, 2008: 139); rather, the logic may sometimes be reversed such that the field is changed in order to apply negative sanctions to a targeted group. This constitutes, in effect, a mechanism by which the ‘discourses of derision’ identified by Ball (1995: 260) may be operationalised.

These data develop rather than simply exemplify hysteresis, since they contradict Bourdieu’s implicit assertion that, following a lag in the appropriate habitus, only three possible outcomes exist for the deprivileged. The first is that they attempt to force field conditions to return to those which suited their habitus — Bourdieu described an example of this in *Homo Academicus* (1990a), where university lecturers protested against changes resulting from the 1968 “events”. Second, they might engage in strategies and social interactions whereby their out-of-sync habitus is re-aligned with what is newly necessary*. The third is that they remain discursively and materially deprivileged through their reduced capacity to play the game according to these new rules, and the field is moved on. The fact that Les has managed to obtain, keep and succeed

*Here, whilst mindful of King’s (2000) critique of habitus as, contrary to Bourdieu’s protestations, conceptually inflexible to such strategising, I am following Bourdieu in the spirit of what he intended habitus to achieve regarding agency and the possibility of change, albeit through the incorporation of what King (2000: 417) identifies as a separate strand of his writing – his ‘practical theory’ where spontaneous social interactions between virtuoso players of the game are integral.
in multiple leadership roles, despite structural obstacles and discursive derision, as well as his refusal to conform to the new ways, means that the concept of hysteresis must be expanded to incorporate what is happening. That Les draws strength from his identification in abjection of the privileged form shows that hysteresis is not a temporary effect in place only whilst out-of-sync habitus “catch up”: it may be a more-or-less permanent manifestation of school leaders’ strategic resistance to the dominant discourse. In this sense, it is not unwelcome or even indicative of a failure to thrive: it may be an agentic marker of dissent and a dissenting identity, of a position taken and not a failed position-taking. It differs from the protest described by Bourdieu (1990a); there, lecturers sought to regain their capital, whereas Les, whose job is secure, is fighting for a principle.

**Summary**

The professional practice of those who are located in school headteacher and principal roles has faced major interventions through reforms of training, identity, and work. The contribution of the research reported here is empirical and theoretical, showing how increasingly valorised corporate values and practices misalign with and subordinate those of the welfarist leader who is left behind. Those habitus formed in working-class spaces where there is a refusal to stigmatise comprehensive schooling are marginalised. Integral to this contribution is my argument that the relationship between the histories of these school leaders and the alignment or otherwise of their habitus with current field conditions is not co-incidental, and that capital in this new world is being accorded to those who are accustomed to having it; that field conditions purposively represent their preferred and habitual practices and dispositions which privilege autonomy and privatisation. The reform agenda is therefore reproducing power relations which are currently strong in England and elsewhere internationally. The second contribution centres on my development of the concept of hysteresis, where it is no longer simply an effect of field change but may be an intended outcome of state intervention into field conditions targeted at those to be deprivileged. The concept is also expanded here to include notions of active resistance to a normative, dominant discourse.
What this means is that hysteresis may be invoked by theorists not simply to explain, \textit{post-hoc} and ethnographically, an effect of changed field conditions, but to understand the way in which the state intervenes in fields to effect change at the level of the individual, not just as a by-product but as a purposive re-shaping of identities and practice through facilitating a \textit{preferred habitus}. What is foregrounded in this socially critical analysis is the role and effect of power relations and capital in considerations of field positions, where agents may indeed draw strength from a \textit{dissenting habitus}, but where in fact that is the only option available.

Hysteresis is a relatively under-used tool in Bourdieu’s kit: the arguments presented here constitute both a heuristic for questioning field conditions in education and education leadership and a challenge to scholars to develop it further. Where, for instance, might the limits of purposive state manipulation of the sanctioned habitus lie and on what might that depend? And finally, to what extent is the adoption of a dissenting position produced through hysteresis merely the misrecognition of the consequences of symbolic violence?

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\textbf{References}


Chapter ten: School leadership in neoliberal and neoconservative times

10.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I intend first to recapitulate the context of the thesis, next to present and discuss the main findings arising from the research project, then to summarise the six analyses and their key findings and to draw on these in order to address the study’s research questions. These are:

1. In what ways, why and with what effects has state-funded schooling provision become so recently structurally and competitively diverse and dynamic?

2. How is school leadership in this newly diverse terrain conceptualised and articulated through policy and by headteachers and principals, and with what effects?

3. How is the relationship conceptualised and articulated between school type and school leadership, and with what effects?

Finally in this chapter, I will set out a series of statements concerning the contributions to knowledge arising from this thesis and provide recommendations for future research.

10.2. Summary of research focus, aims and findings

The focus of this thesis — established in chapter one and developed in chapter two — has been the relationship between ideas, policies, discourse and practices. Specifically, it concerns the interplay between structure and leaders’ agency in an education field which has been purposively fragmented and hierarchised through successive governments’ ideological commitment to the neoliberal tenets of differentiation and competition as a means of raising standards in schools. Simultaneously and sometimes in tension with this, education as a set of complexly interconnected technologies is also used as a means of achieving neoconservative objectives, whereby moral or other significance is attached to certain forms of knowledge and ways of knowing and
value is accorded to their (inequitable) reproduction. In the present context, this impetus has aligned with the supposed needs of the economy to produce discourses of privilege concerning technical and work-place skills and a linked curriculum, and in parallel a core of “traditional” academic subjects. This privileging, evident in policy texts and realised through the sorts of new academy types created (e.g. UTCs and studio schools), has produced in new (and re-configured) schooling provision identifiable curricular and discursive patterns, if not quite coherence within this fragmentation. Neoliberal ideologies have contributed to these patterns of provision in privileging school types which draw on or are directly led, through sponsorship, by business — its models, actors, methods, attitudes, structures and financing. There are concomitantly reduced roles for democratically accountable local authorities. Both neoliberalism and neoconservatism produce hierarchies — the former through winners in the market place and the latter through possessing and/or acquiring arbitrarily privileged forms of capital. These hierarchies in turn produce position-takings by and enforced positioning of school leaders within the field, and so I have used predominantly Bourdieu’s thinking tools to achieve the thesis’ aims of illuminating, conceptualising and explaining these struggles as the ways in which headteachers and principals understand and operationalise their leadership within this landscape. In accordance with the policy-scholarship tradition within which this work is situated, I have located these data within their social, political, economic and ideological context in my critical analyses, demonstrating and theorising some of the consequences of what is revealed in these accounts and in the documentation regarding power relations, agency and structure. Arendt’s tools were preferred to Bourdieu’s in one analysis in order to do justice to the scale and scope of the terror being deployed across schools in the name of educational leadership and school improvement.

In synthesis, the main findings of the research project are as follows:

1. Schooling provision in England consists of over 70 types of school; extant diversity has been overlaid by a 30-year policy drive privileging supply-side interventions in an increasingly marketised “system”, this noun no longer adequately describing the fragmented landscape. Most of these interventions derive from the template of the academy-type, whose legal, discursive and structural autonomies provide the space for
school-type differentiation. This provision is hierarchised, with privilege not simply accruing to market winners as it would were that market “free”, but strongly steered through neoconservative impulses which favour certain knowledge and ways of knowing. Neoliberalism informs the meanings accorded to the provision and the way it is developing: failing schools are subject to take-over, “growth” means expansion, CEOs or executive headteachers occupy privileged roles in those system-leading organisations and all schools, or sites where learning is delivered, have a range of structural, cultural and/or financial connections with the private sector.

2. The children, too, are hierarchised in ways which are classed and which are conceived through the neoliberal lens of economic utility, and fit discursively into this provision in a number of ways in order to train for their future role and identity set out for them between the ages of 11 and 14. They may be selected, especially if they are middle class, or if not, they may self-select into inferior provision under the guise of “school choice”. The most disadvantaged may be obliged to attend a given school type, such as a PRU.

3. Headteachers, principals and forms of leadership are also hierarchised. The neoliberal game currently being played demands success according to that logic, and so system leaders, or those with close structural or governance links to business are privileged. Neoconservative tendencies in policy mean that additionally, heads or principals whose schools demonstrate high attainment and/or progress in subject areas deemed canonical earn significant capital. The correlation of such schools with relative social advantage means that this process is classed. Education policy currently favours a model of independent state school which draws explicitly on the independent sector, and so principals accustomed to that environment find their dispositions align well with what is required to succeed. Concomitantly, the stigmatisation persists of leadership models, styles and values which draw on what Clarke and Newman identified as bureau-professional (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

4. Leadership reflects an intensifying theme of corporatism, where “relentless” business-derived practices are mandated through policy or
enabled through deepening corporatised cultures within schools. In this way, teacher disposal is no stranger than hiring a consultant to ensure “Ofsted-readiness”. Those leading any school type are susceptible to this, although some such as Les are bi-cultural still. Principals of newer school types largely perceive the corporate as modern, progressive or revolutionary, and as a sign of their distinction in the field. What is equally clear is that this is enabling practices which arguably are authoritarian at least, and which are a product and producer of dissonance between leaders and followers in terms of values, practices, and identities.

5. New actors are becoming increasingly powerful in the field in ways that structure the agency of headteachers and principals. These include those CEO (executive) principals, characterised here as courtiers, who embody an aggressive growth strategy which is intelligible and made possible through conceptualising education as a neoliberal technology. Also newly powerful are actors from the field of business who are sponsoring academy-type schools, chairing or belonging to governing bodies and thereby influencing heads or principals who see their practice as normative. Lastly, through creating entire new school types, actors such as Lord Baker of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust are shaping the whole landscape of provision, and are doing so through the two mechanisms of access to capital and access to and influence with key decision makers. Such mechanisms are not available to most people. Inequity is consequently a major theme in this study, manifesting itself in the ways in which provision, children, leaders, and leadership are hierarchised and how capital secures privilege within the system.

I shall now summarise the main findings arising from each discussion chapter. In chapter four, I presented and discussed a series of typologies mapping schooling provision in England to argue that a historical tolerance of diversity and state preference for multiple providers of education has been overlaid by school-type diversification policies over 30 years to produce a hugely complex picture of provision. The main findings were as follows:
1. There are between 70 and 90 different types of state-funded school in England (depending on what one considers to be differentiating criteria). Children may not choose from this number; there are a number of entry requirements and disqualifiers, both overt and covert.

2. These types are not just differentiated, they are hierarchised. Privileged types include those attracting a “better quality” student, i.e. likely to attain highly; having close links with businesses; being in or especially leading a multi-academy trust or teaching school; and, evidencing neoconservatism’s significance, teaching a valorised curriculum, especially one focusing on STEM subjects.

3. Long-standing or formerly significant structures and actors are re-imagined in the present and given new meanings in a neoliberal, neoconservative policy context in a manner suggested through the metaphors of geological faulting and folding. Exemplifying this are faith schools and the religious institutions which sponsor and/or govern them.

4. The proliferation of academy-type schools has facilitated the furthering of corporate interests, where for instance school types are created as brands in order to produce through their pedagogies, curricula, governance, partnerships, cultures and leadership future trained workers for those corporations. This is accompanied by the transfer of public assets to private ownership in the form of school buildings (often renovated) and land through take-overs, including hostile, of LA-maintained schools by academy sponsors.

5. Schooling in England may consequently no longer be characterised as wholly public, although there remains an element of provision whose locus of legitimation is public. So, whilst “publicness” may be integral to the ways many school communities identify themselves and their values, the ways in which it is operationalised are becoming increasingly thin and may, particularly in the case of stand-alone academies, largely be predicated on the ways it interacts with its local community.

6. Multi-school groupings, especially MATs, are currently expanding rapidly as a means of replacing LAs in their systemic functions as providers of school-to-school support. This expansion aligns with the neoliberal
preference for decision-making to be carried out by those closest to the consequences of those decisions, which devalues other forms of knowledge (e.g. “expert”).

So, mapping the terrain from different perspectives permits the fragmentation and historicity within schooling provision to be clearly seen, yet also shows how neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies are presently serving to produce new clusters of meanings, even amongst old institutional actors. These patterns are not mutually coherent or consistent and produce as many tensions as they resolve, since these ideologies’ goals and means of operationalisation often differ.

In chapter five, I explore the hierarchisation of schooling provision and how policy and the discourses revealed through heads’ and principals’ accounts are establishing the conditions for sorting children into this provision through self-selection. The main findings were as follows:

1. Education policy constructs children’s ability as fixed and knowable — for some, even genetic — categorising children into markets according to their future economic utility.

2. New school types, predominantly based on the academy type with its regulatory and structural “freedoms”, are appearing in alignment with this hierarchisation. They emphasise technical and workplace-skill development through differentiated curricula, pedagogies and importantly, differentiated expectations of student outcomes evidenced through the level and range of qualifications typically offered.

3. Hierarchisation is nonetheless simultaneously occluded through, for instance, the use and prohibition of certain forms of language or lexis such as *vocational*, and the privileging of “fit” over “level” in marketing materials.

4. Selection underpins this model, but it is a form which is discursively located in children’s agency whereby schools market their brand to children and their parents, who, following Bourdieu (1990c) and his conceptualisation of class habitus, are understood in policy texts and the accounts of headteachers and principals should self-select into a school
whose characteristics and level “match” their dispositions and expectations.

5. This process raises grave concerns about social justice for working-class children through limiting the development of their potential capabilities whilst simultaneously removing the antagonising structure from obvious culpability — working class children are to actively choose their own subordinated position in the hierarchy.

This analysis calls attention to the existence of, discursive mechanisms for and potential consequences of school-type hierarchisation. It shows how inequality is being increasingly structured into the way education is provided — not as an accident but as a necessary effect of its conceptualisation within a neoliberal/neoconservative framework. This is constructed, or at least reproduced through policy and reproduced in leaders’ accounts.

In chapter six, I demonstrated the effects on heads’ subjectivities and agency of courtiers — a small number of powerful regional actors with close relationships with the policy elite — who are constructing empires using the tools available in a marketised landscape. Here, preferment counts and has monetary value through successful bids for contracts and acquisitions of failed schools. The main findings were as follows:

1. MATs and teaching-school alliances offer a discursively privileged structural route for expansionist school-leaders-as-CEOs to grow their portfolio and/or expand their reach to become elite players of the game. The system leadership they practise is thereby constructed and confirmed as normative.

2. Systemically, this is at the expense of local authorities, whose reduced functional role as provider of a range of school services and reduced symbolic role as regional strategic leader are policy goals.

3. The activities of these courtiers position those school leaders attempting to do leadership in their empire in a number of ways, though all may usefully be understood through the lens of neoliberalism, where acquisition, out-bidding and market dominance are normalised features.
4. As part of this normalisation, the means through which dominant relations are gained or maintained by these courtiers — symbolic violence — is mostly misrecognised by other school leaders, who perceive only their superior playing of the game. Where no grounds exist for this assumption, and in the manner predicted by Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), dominance is attributed to abuse of power.

What this analysis foregrounds is the way in which corporatism is now firmly embodied in the practices, habitus and cultures of some education professionals. The very highest rungs are not open to any headteacher or principal, however, regardless of the number of “badges” acquired: there are factors underpinning the final hurdle of preferment which are not susceptible only to playing the game as well as one can, and indeed, none of my participants has succeeded in this way. Whilst this study has not explored who these courtiers are and what characteristics they possess, nonetheless questions may be asked about the extent to which existing and inequitable power structures are being reproduced through this new game.

In chapter seven I move on to consider the influence of corporatisation on educational leadership. I distinguish corporatisation from privatisation through the former’s wider objectives to work towards achieving “educational” aims conceptualised through the lens of business, to adopt business cultures, and to use business financing, where possible through engaging with actors from the field of business as partners, sponsors, governors or other collaborators. I argue that this definition exceeds what Gewirtz (2002) identified as new managerialist, which is predominantly a technology through which practice and identities are operationalised and made meaningful. The term corporatisation is necessary to understand the increasing ways in which this technology is reinforced through the direct involvement of actors from that business field such that school leaders may be accountable to business sponsors who may therefore be responsible for the vision, or that these latter co-construct the curriculum or finance endeavours constructed as “educational”. The main findings of the paper were as follows:

1. Whilst corporatising tendencies may be seen in schools of any type, the discourse is more evident in new academy-type schools, whose leaders understand corporatism as modern or even necessarily revolutionary
and as a means of differentiating their brand from maintained schools. For UTCs and studio schools, their brand is wholly predicated on such corporatism. What this means is that in such schools and for such heads or principals, corporatism underpins the epistemology as well as the practice of school leadership.

2. This is having an effect on heads’ and principals’ identities, which they re-constitute to make themselves intelligible within and to the corporate field. Again, this is seen most often in principals of new school types. Heads’ and principals’ desire to locate their identities in the corporate field means that there is a disconnect between leaders and the led.

3. Practices are also corporatised, again more markedly in principals of academy-type schools. In addition to the more intense corporate discourse referred to in point one above, these principals also have responsibilities which used to belong to the local authority, contributing to their impression that their role increasingly resembles that of a CEO. Corporatised leadership, then, is a policy goal in the re-structuring of schooling provision.

4. Leadership knowledge is corporatised, or commodified, with mandated school-to-school support structures which operationalise corporatisation through a consultancy model.

5. Three mechanisms for realising cross-field effects (Bourdieu, 1990b; Thomson, 2005) from business to educational leadership may be seen in these data: through policy imposition; voluntary adoption by school leaders desiring the symbolic capital associated with business; and the direct introduction into the field of educational leadership of actors from the business field as (sponsor) governors, especially as chairs of governors.

6. For less experienced headteachers or principals, the corporatising effect of these governors may be considerable, and is operationalised in five ways: through embodying accountability to corporate sponsors in the chair/principal relationship; through recruiting principals and managing their performance; through investing in the school; through influencing curricula and pedagogies; and through their high symbolic capital.
deriving from a business field privileged by education policy over thirty years.

Thus, this analysis reveals an intensification of processes highlighted by many education researchers since ERA (e.g. Ball, 2008b; Bottery, 2007; Clarke and Newman, 1997; Gewirtz, 2002; Gunter, 2012; Slater, 2014; Whitty, 2008). What is new is the way in which corporate actors are getting involved in school governance, currently constructed as leadership, and changing headteachers’ and principals’ practice and ways of understanding that practice.

In chapter eight, with Helen Gunter, I analysed the extremely unequal power relations presently operating in schools to argue that totalitarianism, misrecognised as leadership, is being operationalised through vision work to serve the purposes of the reform agenda. We drew attention to the way in which vision and relentless leadership are invoked as a normative and unproblematic means of enacting mandated change, including the disposal of teachers. The main findings were as follows:

1. The standards agenda constitutes an ideology through its privileging of high rates of progress and attainment at all costs. It is being internalised by headteachers and principals as their vision where it is misrecognised as being particular to them, thereby enabling the fiction of their unique fitness to rule.

2. Technologies of surveillance, especially the use of data, facilitate what we argue are totalitarian practices concerning the enforcement of the headteacher or principal’s vision/standards agenda. These practices, understood through the construct of relentless leadership as being desirable and necessary to correct behaviour and disrupt identities, involve the use of sanctions including teacher disposal through a range of means, e.g. constructive or outright dismissal and organisational restructuring, where it is rendered banal and occluded through bureaucracy.

3. Collegial forms of leadership such as distributed may be invoked in this paradigm, but they are conceptually hollow or disingenuous: power is retained with the headteacher, or distributing leadership may even be a
euphemism for making the leader omnipresent in order to monitor teachers more effectively.

4. The climate of performativity prompting these tendencies is present in all schools, and so these effects are seen to varying extents regardless of school type. However, the regulatory freedoms that principals of academy-type schools have concerning staff’s contractual arrangements mean that there, the discourse is more intense and teacher disposal may be achieved more easily and rapidly.

This analysis highlights the troubling ways in which a high-stakes culture of performativity may motivate heads’ and principals’ authoritarian practices and distort understanding of them to the extent that their misrecognition requires double-speak. So, totalitarianism is leadership; surveillance is monitoring; and disposal is re-structuring.

Whilst Les, as a successful headteacher operating in the same macro-context as the other participants, engaged willingly in corporate practices such as teacher monitoring/disposal and prioritising the budget over all other areas of management, his biography spoke to welfarist, communitarian notions of education and its leadership in a way that was absent from other, more enthusiastically corporatised heads and principals, and so in chapter nine, I theorised the relationships between corporatism, headteacher and principal identities, practices, and biographies by drawing on Bourdieu’s (1990a) concept of hysteresis and the stories of a headteacher, Les, and a principal, Paul. I developed Bourdieu’s use of hysteresis in arguing that rather than being an effect of change, it may constitute a desired outcome, a strategy on the part of the state in order to privilege actors in the field with dispositions favourable to the policy environment, and to deprivilege those with dispositions inimical to its reproduction. The main findings were as follows:

1. Leadership and leaders, as well as their schools, are hierarchised, with those having corporate values, attitudes, identities, practices and partners subordinating those evincing what Gewirtz (2002) has identified as welfarist values and identities.

2. This is operationalised as a purposive, ideological strategy of symbolic violence by the state through, for instance, closing the schools where
welfarist heads feel drawn to work or deriding them in policy texts and by rewarding those who are disposed to favour innovation, autonomy and entrepreneurialism with new forms of school predicated on those features.

3. These distinctions are classed, with those habituated to the independent sector finding homologies more easily with the state-funded version it has inspired than working-class leaders. The process thus exemplifies the state’s continuing transfer of capital —understood widely, following Bourdieu (1990b) — to those already possessed of capital.

4. Hysteresis may sometimes indicate a strategic, embodied resistance to the dominant, normative discourse through which actors construct their identity and fashion their values. Hysteresis may then be a source of strength as much as anxiety.

In summary, this analysis of narrative accounts shows how the state’s interventions into the way schools are led, the way that leading is understood and who does that leading intersect with heads’ and principals’ biographies to make certain policy directions probable or possible and inhibit others. These policy directions have implications for actors who embody and experience them as lives and careers; they are also strategies for reproducing power relations to manipulate field conditions.

10.3. Responding to the research questions

In the following three sub-sections, I shall address explicitly the way in which my findings answer and illuminate my research questions.

10.3.1. In what ways, why and with what effects has state-funded schooling provision become so recently structurally and competitively diverse and dynamic?

In this research project, I have mapped schooling provision through a series of typologies with accompanying contextualisation and through identifying and theorising the discourses of hierarchisation relating to that provision. I want here to discuss in more detail the “why” of state-funded schooling provision’s diversification through returning to the ideology of neoliberalism and
anticipating charges of over-attribute commod. It is true that any single event or period germane to this project may be examined and singular claims about its cause problematised. Batteson (1997), for instance, does exactly this in his analysis of Callaghan’s positioning during what turned out to be a catalysing moment in 1976, warning against over-privileging ideological motivations when ‘pragmatism, expediency and electoral sparring’ (p. 371) were equally, if not more important. It is also clear that ideologies are understood and operationalised incoherently, inconsistently and with a changing intensity (Ball, 2012a). These two points are, of course, related; the local, national and international political context both facilitates and inhibits discourses and their reproduction, and does so in a variety of ways. Scholarly analyses attempting to capture what is currently happening inevitably reflect these changes, and so in Ball’s 2007 exploration of private-sector participation in public-sector education, published near the end of New Labour’s three-term administration, he felt able to describe the policy environment as ‘post-neo-liberal’ (p. 21). For him at that time, Labour’s Third Way represented a meaningful and purposive break with neoliberalism’s reliance on the unmediated power of free markets through its commitment to state intervention to mitigate their negative social consequences. In 2007 then, it was possible to write about ‘the inadequacies of neo-liberalism as an initial response’ (Ball, 2007: 5) to educational problems. By 2012, however, in his sequel, Global Education Inc., all reference to post-has disappeared; the book takes as a given the re-established pervasiveness of neoliberal ideology in seeking primarily to discover ‘the how of neo-liberalism. How it is promoted. How it is “done”. How it “works”’ (Ball, 2012, original emphasis). What this exemplifies is the way in which the subtleties of any contemporary context can quickly be lost as more deeply established structures play out over the longer term, especially where these interplay with or are reproduced through the maintenance of positions in the field by powerful actors who are concerned more with that reproduction than with questions of social justice — this, of course, is unless the contemporary context constitutes an ideological rupture, or paradigm change, and as the example of Ball (2012) illuminates, these are difficult to detect in the moment. Therefore, analyses at both levels are necessary and sometimes different. This is important in the context of the present study because I have argued throughout this thesis that neoliberalism in particular is key to understanding how school-type
diversification is playing out. By doing so, I am not suggesting that other factors have not been operating, or that neoliberalism is a unitary, unchanging construct; I am providing an analysis which attempts to take the long view. From this perspective, for example, the Third Way was not sufficiently distinctive from neoliberalism to have provoked a measurable rupture in its progression when favourable conditions were re-established in 2010. Illuminating this is the way in which administrations of different political parties have intervened decisively and with consistent effect to deregulate provision and diminish LAs through the creation of new academy types with varying “freedoms”. Minor differences, perhaps, in political motivation and the nature and degree of the school autonomies granted have not interrupted academies’ evolution to their present iteration, since these differences were sufficiently small for them to be lost in the development of the model, which was consequently always able to centre on augmenting rather than fundamentally re-structuring what already existed. What results has the post-hoc appearance of coherent, strategic design, which I suggest is a result of a sufficiently if not wholly consistent commitment to neoliberalism as an organising technology and inspiration for structural reform.

So the effects of neoliberalism may be likened to those of the Big Bang, whereby provision is pushed apart into new formations. The dark matter pulling these formations back together into clustered, hierarchised patterns is neoconservatism, which ‘attempts to specify what knowledge, values, and behaviors should be standardized and officially defined as legitimate’ (Apple, 2004: 24), and does this through homogenous, standardised performance indicators (Clarke and Newman, 1997). This tendency is most recently manifested through the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures. These replace the cruder measure of the percentage of pupils attaining 5 GCCEs at grades A*–C by specifying that that progress and attainment should be predominantly (but not necessarily entirely) in the subjects comprising the E-Bacc measure; English, maths, any science (including computer science), a modern foreign language and a humanities subject. (See DfE (2014a) for a fuller explanation of Progress 8.) Attainment 8 is a pupil’s average score in those eight subjects selected and reported on. In enforcing its privileging of a “traditional” curriculum through these performance indicators in this way, the state is exerting a powerful counter-influence on the diversificatory pressures
manifested elsewhere through policy. It is, for instance, difficult to see how any studio school can perform success against these measures, since few will teach the E-Bacc suite of subjects. Nonetheless, studio schools, career colleges and UTCs represent another strand in this clustering of provision; their focus on technical or generic work-place skills or STEM subjects speaks to a long-standing policy drive to raise attainment there which is somewhat in tension with the neoconservative goal of promoting a traditional curriculum. Where this is more successful, as with studio schools, I suggest it is because those schools are aimed at pupils who it is deemed would never have benefitted from such a wide-ranging curriculum. Where it is less successful — there being concerns about the viability of the UTC programme (Evans, 2015) — it may be attributed to these schools’ liminal place in the hierarchy. They seek pupils sufficiently able to study at level three, but these pupils might just as likely apply to a less specialised school untainted by the branding of vocational education.

What these ideologies have produced is a “system” in tension, whose most consistent features are the simultaneous strengthening of the state and its withdrawal from providing education in favour of the (re-)establishment and/or (re-)empowering of a range of partners to do so — provided they are not the local authority (McGinity, 2015). Ball (2012b) calls this the reluctant state, arguing that ‘English education policy has come full-circle’ (p. 89) since 1870 through returning to a hesitant approach to direct engagement with the provision of education and a concomitant willingness to involve external partners through a variety of means. Indeed, identifying a new way to do this and new partners to do it with has in recent policy underpinned most frequently the genesis of a new school type, e.g. city colleges, academies, free schools, trust schools, UTCs, career colleges and studio schools — these three latter exemplifying the elevation of the branded entity to a whole school type. Regardless of whom their partner(s) may be (if indeed one exists at all), schools are coming to be constituted as businesses and their relationship with each other is framed largely by competition, the terms of which are renewed frequently through repeated policy interventions by the strong state. This might have withdrawn from the provision of education, but it is still very much concerned with its steering (Ball, 2012b; Jessop, 1997; Woods and Simkins, 2014). Even where collaboration is structurally facilitated or mandated, as with
teaching schools or multi-academy trusts, the logic of practice remains rooted in competition and market positioning, as chapter six demonstrates.

However, this thesis presents no evidence even of a functioning quasi-market, defined by Bartlett (1993) as one where ‘producers are encouraged to compete against one another and consumers are encouraged to express their preferences, but ... no money actually changes hands’ (p. 126). Rather, this is a *pseudo-market*, where the illusion of market functioning is maintained but the market is fixed in respect of its relationship to its consumers. The range of educational offers reflects not consumer desire but corporate and economic interests, as well as those of the socio-economically advantaged “consumers” of education. These interests align around the notion that the offer should not just be differentiated, but hierarchised. In economic terms, this is because it is inefficient not to involve corporate interests at every level from the conceptualisation of educational purposes to their operationalisation, and since workers are required for different levels, it is also inefficient to train people for anything beyond their economic station, which corresponds largely to their class. This speaks to how this interest plays out for the elite, whose position in the field is maintained and reproduced through a distinctive curriculum available at certain schools. Choices are managed such that children are constructed through policy and discourse as being responsible for selecting for themselves the provision which reflects the state’s view of their economic usefulness based on their existing (and therefore, in *this* country, potential for future) capital. Or their choices are constrained through barriers rendered almost invisible through (long-standing) ubiquity: e.g. selection by ability and high house prices near excellent schools, which are therefore colonised by the middle classes (Coldron et al., 2010). These structures and ideologies permit the re-emergence of religious institutions as a force in English education provision; where for instance elitism may speak to their discourses of salvation; strong British values to their conservative moral ethos; and market positioning to their established track record of and capacity for educational provision. The pseudo-market facilitates the reproduction of inequitable power relations in a manner redolent of the 11+, but does so in a way which culpabilises the objects of those relations. Where real choice exists, it is available predominantly to the socio-economically advantaged. The market, constructed as morally neutral, remains blameless. The pseudo-market therefore is the
most recent way of reproducing long-standing features of schooling provision in England, summarised by Johnson (1989: 97-98) thus:

There is a strong case for regarding differentiation as the hallmark of English education. The multiplication of institutional differences has offered maximum opportunities for social divisions and exclusiveness ... The repeated tendency has been to add new educational forms onto the existing provision, in a pattern which has been termed ‘substitutional’, that than to reconstruct the whole according to a unified plan. In the differences between co-existing fragments, all kinds of social inequality have been sustained.

Johnson argues that social differentiation and position-taking finds a way to happen in a fragmented system. I suggest that this is now, and perhaps always has been purposive, an aim rather than an effect of the system. What is new is that presently, these inequities are produced structurally just as efficiently and effectively as under an explicitly bi- or tri-partite system, but that the mechanism of self-selection is added to overt selection and obscured under the banner of school choice.

One area in which the pseudo-market operates much like any market in late capitalism is its construction of powerful producers. In chapter six, I have shown how market dominance in education may be achieved through take-over and merger. So far, so Bakerite; what is troubling and distinct from Kenneth Baker’s original, Hayekian vision for systemic improvement is how expansion is predicated only tangentially on educational success, but more overtly on official preferment, personal contacts and established networks.

10.3.2. How is school leadership in this newly diverse terrain conceptualised and articulated through policy and by headteachers and principals, and with what effects?

The participants in this study accept the label, identity and role of leader as constructed through the presently still dominant leadership discourse deriving conceptually from transformational leadership (see Bass, 1990), notwithstanding talk of distributed leadership. They thereby buy into the ontological status of the position as distinct and superior (whose superiority does not necessarily rest on having all the answers all the time, but sometimes on knowing better than others when to ask for help and from whom), and also
into the notion that their activities make the difference between organisational success and failure. These are assumptions which have been critiqued convincingly by, for instance, Eacott (2014) and Gunter (2012). Both insist that the current iteration of school leadership is better understood as a mechanism for operationalising managerialism and, as Gunter (2012) argues, its role in this respect is misrecognised in order to facilitate a new, emotionally predicated and therefore more ontologically implicating way for workers to buy into the reform agenda (see also Allix, 2000; Gunter et al., 2013).

These critiques are supported by the findings in this present study, which identifies and conceptualises vision work as the primary way in which leadership as a disciplinary technology is operationalised. Through leaders’ engaging in vision work, an extrinsically and pre-determined agenda fulfilling neoliberal/conservative reform goals may be transformed into, or more accurately misrecognised by heads and principals as something more personal and contextual, and whose achievement involves and disrupts subjects’ emotions and status as independent moral agents. This research project has highlighted how leaders’ vision work serves to reproduce the inequitable social arrangements and relations which are structured into the standards agenda. So, organisational hierarchies, e.g. between leaders and the led, are made sharper and the consequences of their disruption more serious through sanctioned teacher correction, disposal and reputational damage, rather than fuzzier or flatter, which was a goal underpinning the original turn to leadership where that leadership was understood as influence realisable by anyone in the organisation (Eacott, 2014). Simply put, only leaders have the vision and the right not only to enact it, but to require others to enact it. Where this happens, leadership is deemed strong or effective — although achieving it will require leaders to be relentless, and this includes getting rid of people. I applied Arendtian rather than Bourdieuan thinking tools to this phenomenon precisely to demonstrate how strong this tendency is amongst my participants, but also how unthinking, which is one of Arendt’s major contributions to understandings of how ordinary people can do extraordinary things.

The alignment of the empowered, authoritarian, autonomous and managerialist leader constructed through this discourse and the idealised model of a corporate CEO is not coincidental. Corporatism pervades leadership practices
and identities, producing new subjectivities following corporate logics, such as school restructuring or expansion, adding value, promoting the school’s brand through the self and raising what is understood as productivity — constituted of children’s progress in standardised tests and teachers’ ability to ensure it. No headteacher or principal in this study is immune from corporatism, even Les, one of the more welfarist. Where Les differs most is in his selection of school and its concomitant community in which to practise: he applies his own brand of corporatism in schools whose pupils will never “add value” in the way demanded by the discourse. He is not arguing for a return to the sort of public comprehensive school where he started teaching, whose ethos he dismisses through recounting how teachers’ role there was to ‘civilise’ the pupils; he wants a new, improved sort of public school, where the improvement might be brought about by incorporating certain elements of the standards agenda.

This means that leadership practices consist largely of activities designed to have the leader’s vision enacted within a corporatised environment. These include staff surveillance, organisational growth, bid tendering, and importantly, preparing children for a life of economic productivity in an appropriate setting for the talents or ability they have thus far demonstrated or for their often class-based dispositions and expectations — these corresponding to future capacity. Other leadership forms are possible — I have called these dissenting identities, but most heads and principals do not dissent and the most successful post-holders — defined as those system leaders leading multi-academy trusts and/or teaching-school alliances — are those who embody and promulgate this corporatist discourse.

The impression of quasi-regal power which the corporatised model of leadership brings is at odds with the realities of operating in a system where better players of the game are thriving. So corporatism constructs an illusory autonomy and potency which, since these must be maintained in order to sustain the fiction of leaders’ vision work, leads subordinated heads and principals such as Phil to misrecognise their own relatively constrained agency as purposive and strategic. Or for those such as Bridget, who see clearly the inequitable circumstances promoting such thriving by the powerful, one’s own leadership, however moral, is able to take one only so far in a corrupt landscape.
The field I am describing comprises practices and dispositions not shared by other school staff, who are increasingly distanced from leaders and leadership. Language plays a part here; words such as ambitious, commercial and relentless have different meanings; when leaders speak, they aim at intelligibility primarily with the corporate field. So, educational leadership increasingly stands apart from education; conceivably, functionalist claims that the “truths” of leadership are universal and timeless may one day prove true through self-fulfilment (see e.g. Fullan, 2008).

10.3.3. How is the relationship conceptualised and articulated between school type and school leadership, and with what effects?

The tendencies described above to corporatised leadership operationalised through vision work are both intensified and facilitated through new, academy-type structures. Principals of such schools are more inclined to see themselves as part of a salvational or revolutionary movement to re-focus education on what is axiomatically important — standards. The freedoms they have in order to achieve this in their schools are seen as vital to the job, yet this neoconservative standards agenda and the performativity culture enforcing it homogenise the conceptualisation and practice of leadership. This has been remarked before (e.g. Apple, 2004; Gewirtz, 2002); what is new is the relish many of these leaders show in undertaking this work. So, identities are deeply implicated in the role of leader and the activities constructed as constituting leading. Despite the tendency to homogenisation owing to the ubiquity and the ubiquitous acceptance of the transformational discourse underpinning leadership, new structural forms facilitate the intensification of the discourse, and consequently the practices identified in this thesis. For instance, all the headteachers and principals throw people off the bus, but in new school types regulatory freedoms mean that teacher disposal is much easier. Structures do matter, and they matter in determining whose voice counts, to what extent and what happens when you disagree. This argument repositions school structural reform away from a focus on the technical, caricatured pithily by Beckett (2011: xxi):

‘It’s very easy to invent a new kind of school’, the schools adjudicator Philip Hunt once said. ‘You come up with a name, play
around with the governing body, decide who owns the land and appoints the staff, and decide how funding gets to it. That's it'.

What I am describing are embodied consequences of these structural reforms, where the cumulative effect of answering Hunt's questions above in certain ways and with certain motives produces power differentials in schools which make invocations of distributed leadership risible. Structural changes have also introduced new corporate actors directly into school leadership through governance arrangements, where sponsors do leadership, influence the leadership of existing heads and principals and have these actors account to them for their activities. The effects of this on leadership are profound and derive directly from technical alterations to governance arrangements. The reason for this is that they are ideologically motivated, and consequently are intended to shift the way practice and identities are understood in a way which makes the corporatisation of leadership not only possible, but normative.

Whilst understanding education in terms of pupils' future employment is common in heads and principals of all school types, the technical/vocational element of the curricular and pedagogical offer from studio schools and UTCs produces intensified attitudes amongst their principals concerning the place and role of corporate and industrial interests and purposes in the education they provide. So, whilst Hazel and Paul, for example, see employment preparation as important and may develop links with businesses, to Will and Rodney it is fundamental; a unique selling point differentiating their school in the local market. The links with business run deep: in addition to their expression in leadership identities generally as described above, in Will’s UTC and Rodney’s studio school, business purposes and methods suffuse what it means to be a leader doing leadership. As their school types are new, so this way of thinking about and doing leadership is understood as modern and progressive. Those in charge of schools which are not structurally set up to facilitate these links talk of this form of corporate, industrialist leadership a little enviously; it is a form they will do their best to emulate, at least in part, with fewer structural resources and advantages, or, like Bridget, will take delight in succeeding in finding those opportunities through more creative means.

The way in which heads’ and principals’ autonomy plays out in the context of school type is more nuanced than is discursively constructed, more nuanced
even than Beckett’s (2011: xxi) still accurate conclusion that sponsored academy principals ‘have less freedom from their sponsor than ordinary maintained schools have from the state’. Sponsored academy-type school principals celebrated the notion and discussed the importance of autonomy even as they revealed the ways in which they were constrained. Jane, for example, saw autonomy as central to her success, but was happy to let ‘head office’ deal with many of the legal and administrative aspects of principalship that Phil was obliged to address as headteacher of a converter. She was, in effect, Head of School Attainment. Will, whose UTC had industrial as well as university sponsors, had his autonomy constrained by the industrialist paradigm within which he was operating (though he didn’t see that as a constraint); by his inferior knowledge of the industrial and entrepreneurial game whose players he was supposed to be leading as “knowledge-deliverers” in his UTC; by the lack of necessary funding for his more expensive form of provision; and, this last fatal, by his ultimate inability to produce a viable school with sufficient numbers on roll. By the end of the study, Will might have retained the title of principal, but he had become a vice-principal in reality and had long since stopped talking about his autonomy. Rodney understands autonomy as relating uniquely to the local authority; the way his studio school and his leadership of it cannot be understood shorn of their obligations to corporate partners goes unrecognised. Bridget has amassed considerable capital over her career, yet as headteacher of a voluntary-aided school she had to defer to the Diocese in a great number of matters, and as a PFI new-build school she can’t open her school without permission on a Saturday. The most obvious candidate for greater autonomy is Phil, who as principal of a converter academy has all the regulatory freedoms and none of the obligations to a hands-on sponsor. Nonetheless, Phil’s agency is considerably constrained by the virtuoso game-playing of a neighbouring MAT CEO. Had Hazel or Les been leading in a school impacted by Brian Sykes’ activities, then I am likely to have concluded the same about their relative autonomy, and so it is perhaps a coincidence fortunate for them that they do not, and that I am able to write that as headteachers of maintained schools, they demonstrate in their accounts that they have certainly no less freedom than the others. What constrain them, as any headteacher or principal, are the demands of a performative audit culture (Courtney, 2014c). The constraints on headteachers’ autonomy I am
describing here have to be understood in the context of English heads’ historically and relatively high levels of freedom (Grace, 1995; Thomson, 2010); of course all leadership occurs within discursive and material boundaries. What I am arguing is that although the precise relationship between school type, school reform and heads’ autonomy is more complex than the discourse surrounding autonomy allows — though work is starting to be done here (Salokangas and Chapman, 2014) — the findings presented here suggest that autonomy functions predominantly as a discursive construct to permit the privatisation of public education.

Finally, new hierarchies of leadership are being established where what matters most is a headteacher or principal’s capacity and desire to lead systems. Some of my participants are starting to play that game, e.g. Bridget, but others have reached that stage before her and are monopolising the territory. I use that verb advisedly, for the rules of system leadership are those of late capitalism, where market share is gained through acquisitions and mergers so that whichever school one chooses, there might one day be the equivalent of a Unilever behind it. It is ironic — or as Apple (2013) — would argue, a purposive tactic of the right’s — that this is being done, as Paul says, to challenge the hegemony of local authorities.

10.4. Contributions to the field

This thesis contributes to the field of critical policy studies of school leadership by revealing significant, new, corporatised practices and objectives in the educational field that serve to subject teachers (including heads and principals) to new forms of symbolic violence, owing to new structurations of power in the field (for example through new institutional forms such as sub-types of academy and new multi-school groupings) and their associated leadership discourses. These new structures also serve to create both modifications in the doxa and accompanying discourses, with opportunities for corporatism but also for hysteresis.

In illuminating this, the present study makes a theoretical contribution to knowledge through its application of Bourdieuan thinking tools to the newly expanded terrain of schooling provision and the practices of headteachers and
principals within it. The close interplay of empirical data and Bourdieuan theoretical tools has been fundamental to generating insights throughout this thesis into what the differentiation of provision means for those engaged in leading and being educated within it and how that should be understood in relation to questions of power. In this, I have followed Bourdieu’s prescriptions for his work which amounts to ‘a “theory of research practice” [whose] key concepts only make sense, therefore, when applied to practical research’ (Grenfell, 2014b: 213). What is revealed is a complex interaction between agency and structure, where agency may be enacted within a social space whose features, and the way these features relate to one another, are subject to misrecognition such that inequality may be not only an effect of a fragmented system, but an objective. It is only through using Bourdieu’s thinking tools, particularly misrecognition as a purposive tool in the hierarchisation of provision and of those to be provided for that the reversals of meaning and examples of double-speak which pervade education policy and discourse become intelligible. For example, how social justice is served by limiting children’s opportunities, how privatising education challenges hegemony, and how making staff contracts more “flexible” negates the corporatism of a ‘bean-counting’ sponsor.

Whilst it is almost meaningless to talk about an education system owing to its purposive fragmentation, in this study I have conceptualised it as a Bourdieuan field to reflect how leaders perceive that they are part of the same game and that they are playing by the same rules, but with different resources (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1990c, 1998). This unitary framework has allowed me to show for the first time in the literature how and why heads and principals from across this diversified terrain position themselves and are positioned, whichever school type they lead. Previous literature (e.g. Coldron et al., 2014) has not explored the full range of provision in this way. In chapter six, for instance, my use of field to characterise the terrain of provision constituting one courtier’s empire illuminates the way in which very different school types are connected and their heads or principals compete for resources, or capital, through bringing to bear on their ‘permanent relationships of inequality’ (Bourdieu, 1998 in Thomson, 2008: 72) both the power at their disposal and ‘the mental structures through which they apprehend this space’ (Bourdieu, 1990b: 14).
The concept of hysteresis is developed in a number of ways from the way it has been used by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990a; Hardy, 2014) or by scholars applying hysteresis in their own empirical work (Kerr and Robinson, 2009; McDonough and Polzer, 2012; Mesny, 2002). First, I have extended its conceptualisation so that it takes account of instances where it is an actively sought rather than simply concomitant effect of changed field conditions. In other words, where those with the capacity to change the field, i.e. the state, desire to visit the dislocation it produces on actors in order to deprivilege them, their values and ways of being and doing, and to privilege actors bearing newly valorised dispositions, thereby sustaining their ideology and reproducing inequitable power relations. Hysteresis is further developed to include notions of the dissenting habitus, whereby a sense of identity in opposition to prevailing field conditions is constructed and where subsequent activity (or activism) is carried out not for the regaining of one’s individual capital, but for a social, ideological or political cause.

Also new in the field of education is my empirical support for Bourdieu’s suggestion that symbolic violence occurs in tandem with misrecognition except in the circumstance where there are no grounds at all for assuming or imagining subordination, a circumstance exemplified through Bridget’s account in chapter six. Bourdieu’s suggestion that this would result in the exposure of the illegitimacy of the enterprise (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) illuminates how spaces for contestation are created even as power is strengthened.

Misrecognition sustains much of the power dynamic described in this thesis. Headteachers and principals misrecognise their internalisation and enforcement of the neoconservative standards agenda as enacting a contextual and unique vision. This has been noted in the literature before (Gunter, 2012; Wright, 2001); what is newly demonstrated in this thesis is how this managerialism may be understood as totalitarian, how headteachers and principals misrecognise this totalitarian managerialism as leadership, and also how the policies promoting and legitimating it are intensifying the discourse, e.g. through Ofsted frameworks (Ofsted, 2012a).

Through this research project, I identify a new mechanism for realising cross-field effects to those previously described (Lingard et al., 2005; Rawolle, 2005; Thomson, 2005, 2010): the direct introduction of actors from one field into
another which is pre-disposed to valorise their dispositions through years of policy interventions. This builds on previous insights where, for instance, actors might occupy two fields simultaneously (Thomson, 2005), and in fact, could not have been observed and theorised until the present conditions arose, these in themselves constituting a further step in the process of corporatising school leadership.

Through this research project, I make contributions to the field of education policy studies beyond the theoretical. The mapping of schooling provision undertaken in this thesis is unique for two reasons. First is its scope; Woods and Simkins (2014) are typical of a number pointing out the difficulty of such an attempt and the inevitable obsolescence of the result — this latter doubtless contributing to discouraging serious scholarly attempt. Second is its methodology, where a complex terrain is captured through a variety of different lenses and then holistically. In consequence of these characteristics, the typologies in chapter four are a snapshot of this period and its socio-political conditions: the longer perspective is provided through their collocation with the accompanying papers.

I also make conceptual contributions to the field. The construct of the corporatised school leader is one which builds on Gewirtz’s (2002) important contribution of the new managerialist. Gewirtz’s conceptualisation foregrounded primarily the way in which NPM as a discursive as well as administrative conduit was changing leaders’ subjectivities, and she also started to map the new ways in which LMS was changing what school leaders do. I developed the notion of the corporatised school leader to reflect contemporary circumstances and thinking, where principals are answering to corporate sponsors; taking on (particularly in academies) tasks and responsibilities as CEOs do; engaging in acquisitions and mergers; leading systems rather than education; working more closely than ever with industrial partners at whole-school and governance levels; line-managing industrialists who are delivering the curriculum as instructors in their UTC or studio school; engaging with the private sector in new and newly expansive ways to perform education services and deliver educational products; and being encouraged more than ever to think of themselves as entrepreneurial (Yemini et al., 2014) and innovative (McGinity, 2015) and to act accordingly.
This work sits within a long tradition of scholarship which foregrounds the role of education in reproducing unequal power relations (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) and the specific way in which that plays out in its English instantiation (Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz, 1996; Coldron et al., 2010; Courtney, 2014c; Crozier et al., 2008; Dorling, 2015; Exley, 2009; Gorard, 2014; Green, 1990; Gunter, 2011; James et al., 2010; Reay, 2001; Walford, 2000). My argument in chapter five that working-class children and their parents are constructed in policy and discourse as being responsible for self-selecting a school according to their habitus has been suggested before (Ball et al., 1996): what is new and constitutes a contribution to the field is the grounding of this claim in a forensic, empirical policy analysis of new comparator school sites where this is playing out and of how these discourses manifest themselves in principals’ accounts. Furthermore, when Ball and his colleagues were writing, provision was not so starkly hierarchised in the way it is currently, the determinants of the provision’s purposes not so strongly linked to economic utility, the school’s characteristics not communicated through branding in the same way and the consequences of the hierarchisation not so pronounced. It is therefore an additional contribution of chapter five in particular that these elements be conceptualised together and brought to the attention of the field.

The final major contribution of the thesis concerns how leadership is being hierarchised in ways which follow a corporatised model of expansion through system leadership via multi-academy trusts and teaching-school alliances, and which rely on the accumulation and deployment of high levels of social, in addition to the previously noted symbolic capital gained through academy leadership (Coldron et al., 2014). This empirical analysis of the roles of economic and social capital in obtaining educational leader roles and practising educational leadership raises new concerns about the legitimacy of the field.

Through the study’s main findings in combination with the specific contributions to knowledge outlined above, this thesis builds on and advances knowledge and understanding within the field concerning how education provision is arranged, how it might usefully be understood, what it means to understand oneself as a leader doing leadership within that provision and how these issues relate to questions of power. In the following and final section, I set out possible
directions for future scholarship and research into school leadership at a time of continuing system diversification, competition and flux.

**10.5. Directions for future scholarship and research**

This study has raised a number of questions and illuminated phenomena in new ways which might usefully be developed into future projects. These are outlined below and conclude the thesis.

The task of mapping the field of provision in England is only ever completed provisionally, and so future attempts might explore alternative perspectives or lenses to those employed here and find new ways to conceptualise the terrain as a whole.

Tracking and theorising the discourse of leadership as it is operationalised by actors who are positioned in a field of power is a pressing and continuing responsibility. Much scholarly activity has been centred on taking at face value normative policies concerning, for example, distributed leadership (see e.g. Harris, 2013): the findings in this study suggest that this line of enquiry and the assumptions underpinning it miss the point, since what is happening speaks more to totalitarianism than democracy. Recent work has started to be done here. For example, the ESRC-funded Distributed Leadership and the Social Practices of School Organisation in England (SPSO) Project [RES-000-22-3610] led by Dave Hall found that discourses of distributed leadership are ‘drawing a veil’ (2013: 267) over processes of managerialism. What is required to move this on is a detailed exploration of how this managerialism is inter-relating with the corporatised leadership identified in the present study. In other words, where managerialism has been shown to provide the mechanism, to what extent does corporatism influence the substantive content?

The work of detailing the corporatisation of school leadership has been undertaken here, drawing methodologically on heads’ and principals’ accounts and on policy texts. What is now required is a more forensic exploration of the ways in which these actors’ work is becoming corporatised and also of the social networks whereby social capital is accrued by certain heads and principals in ways that exclude others. This work might draw on the methods
demonstrated by Ball (2007, 2012a) in his examinations of private-sector networks and interests.

Conceptual frameworks other than the Bourdieuan and Arendtian ones employed here might illuminate the phenomena explored in this study in usefully divergent ways. There is therefore a need for a variety of theoretical tools in order to do this work. I am starting to undertake this work through my lead editorship of a proposed collection of chapters on the role of theory and theorising in educational leadership (Courtney et al., forthcoming). This edited collection will contribute to the Routledge series, *Critical Studies in Educational Leadership, Management and Administration*, edited by Blackmore, Gunter and Thomson.

Research is needed urgently to investigate further the claims made here concerning self-selection by class and school type, particularly in this new, contemporary context where the introduction of studio schools and UTCs have made this particularly important. This research should foreground methodologically the voices of the children involved. The varied methods employed effectively or called for in the extant research literature on school choice and/or pupil voice (e.g. Crozier et al., 2008; Fielding, 2004; James et al., 2010) needs applying to the new terrain of University Technical Colleges and studio schools. This might usefully form part of a larger project into those school/academy types for which research funding could be sought.

This putative larger project might address the following related issue. It has become increasingly clear over the course of the study that the position of UTCs in this hierarchised provision is insecure, owing to their positioning as simultaneously academically challenging and technical. It seems that consumers, despite the overt branding, are often continuing to understand “vocational” when they read or hear “technical” and that they may either see these two characteristics as incompatible and/or do not desire to engage with them. In other words, the old brand surrounding vocational education persists, *faulted and folded* to the surface where it damages UTCs’ ability to recruit able students in the present. This makes the study of UTCs’ rise — and perhaps fall — particularly interesting as a case in the history of provision, and calls for treatment in the tradition of Fitz and his colleagues’ (1993) work on grant-maintained schools, or Walford’s (2000) study of sponsored grant-maintained
schools, fore-runners of today’s free schools. In this way, the ground-work represented by the present study and its contributions to the field of critical education policy studies might provide a useful starting point for a follow-up policy analysis of a perhaps failing school-type as product in a market which isn’t buying into the brand.
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Appendix A: The construction of the sample

The number and nature of the school types whose leader I would interview was to be determined purposively first by the mapping achieved to that point, which would illuminate characteristics of interest or distinction, second by the nature of the schools or heads/principals in the population, since any might embody more than one of the categories selected as being of interest, and third by a degree of opportunity sampling. This latter is because some of the types are uncommon and/or their leaders declined to participate in my study.

In no particular order, the types of school initially suggested by the typology were:

1. Federation
2. Community comprehensive
3. Academy converter
4. Sponsored Academy in a chain
5. Teaching school
6. Free school
7. Studio school
8. University Technical College (UTC)
9. Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
10. Special school
11. Faith school

The reasons why these over other possible types were selected will be discussed in more detail below, in the sections which address the location of participants within each category. I envisaged that a total of nine or ten schools would cover these eleven non-discrete types. In addition to school type, two other elements required consideration in the final sample; leaders’ sex and
heterogeneity of local authority. First, sex; I wanted at least one third of the sample to comprise women in order that any conceptualisation of leadership arising from the study not privilege masculinism through sampling bias. Should masculinist characteristics emerge, readers may have more confidence in my attributing them to the leadership rather than to the leaders’ sex. Moreover, should (these) women prefer other leadership practices, or conceptualise it differently, this sampling strategy will reveal it. Second, geographical diversity; my population consists of secondary schools predominantly in the constituent administrative boroughs of a large urban area. The size and spread of the urban area means that there is considerable community and school diversity across it. Moreover, leaders and especially pupils might not necessarily identify predominantly as belonging to the urban area. As well as heterogeneity of school and identifications, there are also inevitably differences in the cultures and performance of the constituent local authorities (LAs). Since leaders’ relationship with and experiences of their local authority was to be an area of interest in the study, it was therefore important to draw from the range of LAs. Additionally, some of the categories identified had few or no representatives within the urban area, necessitating a widening of the geographical boundaries for the search. Without sufficient thought to geographical heterogeneity, the result may have been a sample which is simultaneously ‘bunched’ and binary, with the larger cohort of leaders serving schools in two or three similar, urban and proximate LAs and then a smaller, scattered group from considerably further away. These two sampling criteria were difficult to apply in any one case; it was only as the sample developed that it was possible to make judgments about whether to exclude or privilege certain local authorities because of over or under-representation up to that point in the sample. Similarly, only in the final stages of putting together the sample was it possible to ascertain what the proportion of men to women was likely to be as invitees accepted or declined to participate, and to select the last places accordingly.

The first step was to compile a database of all eligible schools in the urban area, along with such distinguishing characteristics as were identifiable and useful. The Department for Education (DfE) maintains a database of all schools in England, called Edubase (DfE, no date). I used the search function there to locate all secondary schools in each constituent local authority of the urban area. That, however, meant that many PRUs were missed off, since a number
of these are cross-phase, and so I located these in a separate search. There were some problems with the Edubase database. For instance, sponsored academies were listed as ‘not under a school sponsor’. To locate academy and free school sponsors, I therefore used data collated by Simon Rogers in the Guardian (Rogers, 2012) cross-referenced with the DfE’s own data (DfE, 2013). A second problem with Edubase was the imprecision and inaccuracy of its categorisations. For example, it was not possible to conduct a search solely of studio schools and/or UTCs, and at the time (2 April 2013), studio schools were listed as sponsor-led academies, though this has since been remedied. To avoid scrolling through page after page in a wider search, I therefore used the list found on the website of the Studio Schools Trust (www.studioschoolstrust.org) and on the Baker Dearing Trust’s UTC website respectively (www.utcolleges.org). An example of its inaccuracy is its categorisation of City Technology Colleges (CTCs); one such listed is in fact a City College for the Technology of the Arts, the overarching category being City Colleges, not CTCs. This was not directly germane to my sample, yet it contributed to my decision to cross-reference the database with other sources such as the schools’ own web-site to enhance confidence in the categorisations. A further example which may be seen either as imprecision or inaccuracy was Edubase’s categorisation of admissions; these were given as comprehensive, modern, selective or not applicable. Given that over-subscribed voluntary-aided schools may select according to faith, and similarly admission to a special school requires a statement of special educational need, this broad-brush approach was unhelpful. Nevertheless, by the end of this process I had a spreadsheet which detailed all the secondary schools in the target urban area, along with sufficient of their characteristics to categorise them according to the types listed above and to distinguish between members of each category. These included the number of pupils, the percentage receiving free school meals, the (for academies, geographical) local authority, Ofsted rating, religious character, whether the school is over-subscribed, name of any trust or sponsor, sex of pupils, admissions policy, and any (high-performing) specialisms. This spreadsheet showed that there were insufficient schools in the target urban area to provide a first, second and third choice in the categories of free school, UTC and studio school. I will describe below in my discussion of individual categories how I resolved this. Two categories were not listed as such in
Edubase; teaching schools and federations. The former I located through the DfE’s website; at the time, there were only three in my search area, though this number has since increased. Compiling a list of federations was problematic to the point that my attempt to do so forced the only instance of a re-think of the entire category, and so I shall begin my detailed discussion of each category with this one. Finally in this section, I would like to discuss my means of inviting the selected school leaders to participate. When I arrived initially at a list of potential participants, consisting where possible of a first, second and third choice in each of the categories (nine by this point, since the teaching and the faith school were the same), I printed and sent out a letter on headed paper. After nine days, I started following up my requests by telephoning or emailing the leaders’ PA. These would almost invariably ask me to send the information out again as an email. When, after I had received a number of rejections, or it was not clear who was currently leading the school I was interested in, then it became overly time-consuming to use any means of invitation other than the email version.

Having described how I obtained a population of schools and their leaders in most categories, in the following sections I shall justify my construction or selection of that category and describe how potential invitees were narrowed to a short-list of three, or for the more problematic categories, how sufficient members were located. Finally I shall detail how I was successful in securing the participation of one of these. I shall describe each category in turn for clarity. This does not reflect the process itself, which started with ten simultaneous initial invitations to the first choice, but then fractured into nine individual pursuits of varying lengths. I diarised my progress and required actions for each of these strands; the resulting work is the basis of this appendix.

The most problematic category was federations. When I was unable to locate a definitive list of federations on the DfE’s website, I conducted a series of online searches using the key words ‘federation’; ‘executive headteacher’; and ‘executive principal’. This produced two federations, only one of which was extant. I conducted a similar search on Ofsted’s website (www.ofsted.gov.uk) and located a report of research into the outcomes of federated schools (Ofsted, 2011), which produced a small additional number. Concerned that the one
federation I believed I knew of was not appearing in any of my systematic searches, and that consequently I was not locating a population of federations but rather sporadic examples, I searched this one online and found that it had become a multi-academy trust. Whilst the new trust has members from business, the identity it performs through its online presence privileges still the collaboration between the schools involved, and moreover, its chief executive was formerly one of its headteachers rather than a former or current business leader. This find suggested that the division between federations and multi-academy trusts was not so hard as I had initially thought and language suggests. Nonetheless, it seemed that it would not make sense to conflate the two categories, since many multi-academy trusts have a dominant sponsor from the private sector who is often the chief executive. In the present study of educational leadership, it seemed to me to be an unnecessary deviation from its aims to include subjects who have little direct experience in education (although their data would make a valuable study of its own). What matters in this category is the notion of over-arching leadership, of chief-executiveness, whether this be of federated, maintained schools or of academy chains, especially since a participant may conceivably start the research as one and finish as another. To maintain parity across the new category, which I termed multi-schools, the culture of the enterprise should derive from the constituent schools and/or from the education sector, (although private-sector involvement in the schools or representation on the governing body is no bar to qualification). This was ascertained approximately by analysing briefly the language, presentation, and images of each multi-school website, since as a cross-legal contemporary type, it must be susceptible to capture, or conjure through branding, and this primarily through its self-presentation. Similarly, the leader should have a school leadership background; this information was available online for each case. Having redefined the category, I needed to populate it more completely and systematically. The DfE website referred to earlier (2013) also linked to a spreadsheet detailing converter academies which I used to locate all the schools in the area converting as part of a chain. I also looked back at my population list of schools with a trust, since that would be another way in which multi-schools might be structurally facilitated. Of the resulting list, some multi-schools were discounted for one of a number of reasons. For example, they may have been led by non-educationalists, or
included (too many) primary schools; I adopted this as a disqualifying
classification to retain the focus of the study on secondary schools. Some were
part of a trust with no over-arching chief executive, or one who rotates from
amongst its members, or one so large that its chief executive has an
operational understanding of leadership far removed from the others on the list.
This filtering left two multi-schools. I sent a letter of invitation to my first
choice, who declined to participate, but my second choice agreed. This multi-
school is a federation of special schools, meaning that I could cease my pursuit
of a separate instance of this category.

The second category was community comprehensives. In a sense, this was the
most obvious category to include, since it is the (bog) standard against which
other types are defined, or define themselves. Constructed in policy as ‘the
problem’ with education, its characteristics and governance are derided and its
leadership portrayed as limited and less effective than in newer types. To avoid
contributing to this impression, I wanted the school I selected to be rated at
least good by Ofsted, a decision which I then applied throughout the sample.
To the total of over fifty LA-maintained schools, I applied the following filters.
First, I removed all schools in a local authority in which I had a personal
interest. Second, I removed those which did not have a comprehensive
admissions policy, then those not rated at least good by Ofsted, then those
which were under-subscribed (for the same reason). Finally, I removed those
schools with fewer than 10% of their pupils receiving free school meals (FSM),
since these would have had a greater chance of receiving a higher Ofsted rating.
This produced five schools, which I ordered according to the percentage of
pupils receiving FSM, highest to lowest. All the invitees declined to participate,
but took so long in doing so that the rest of my sample was almost complete. I
needed to re-filter, and by this point knew that my sample would also benefit
from containing another woman. So, I first removed schools from local
authorities already represented in the sample, then all schools not rated at
least good, then all the schools led by men, then all the schools led by women
who had already declined. Finally, I actively preferred those schools which were
over-subscribed. This produced in first place a school whose leader was
revealed on its website in fact to be a man, and so I went to my second choice,
who agreed to participate.
The third category was academy converters, of which there were 33 in the urban area. I wanted to have selective schools represented in my sample, since at least half of my categories either necessarily or inadvertently have a comprehensive intake, and the rest cover such criteria for pupil selection as faith, vocational/technical aptitude, special educational need, or such other characteristics as disqualify them from mainstream schooling. This category was the only one to which I could meaningfully apply a filter of selective admission according to ability. Doing so produced five schools. Next, I removed multi-schools and faith schools (characteristics addressed elsewhere in the sample) to arrive at a short-list of three. There being no further filters I wished to apply, I allocated them first, second and third choice randomly by rolling a die (each school being allocated two of the six numbers). The headteacher of my first choice was unable to participate through illness, but I was successful in recruiting my second choice.

The fourth category was sponsored academies in a chain. Two key elements in the present study are the relationship between neoliberal cultures, values and practices and educational leadership, and its comparison with other, professional constructions or experiences of leadership. For that reason, I wanted to focus on those trusts which sponsor more than ten academies each in order to capture the contemporary phenomenon of an expansionist and discursively privileged business model in education. More than other types of sponsored academy, these are systemically significant in that by virtue of their size, they are becoming de facto local authorities in terms of their functions and scope, though not, importantly, in terms of their accountability structures. It is important not to make claims about these trusts which over-simplify notions of private and public, rendering a binary account of a more nuanced phenomenon. LA-maintained schools have always had governors, in many cases a majority, whose experiences and perspectives are rooted in the private sector. Similarly, many of these large academy trusts have board members who are professors of education or former headteachers, or are products of the independent school sector. Nonetheless, policy discourse is rather blunter and currently privileges what it constructs as private-sector efficiency and effectiveness over public-sector bureaucracy, inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This is often reflected in the claims made by the trusts in question regarding their values, practices and objectives. So, whilst I acknowledge the subtleties of a lived experience of the
public and private spheres and hope to do them justice in the present study, as a critical policy scholar I want to explore the policy construct. I removed those academies whose trust sponsored fewer than ten schools and whose Ofsted rating was less than ‘good’. This latter was because I wanted to apply the same criterion to my selection of community comprehensive in order not to contribute to the discursive pathologising of this type. This produced three academies, all of which declined to participate. I widened my search to include one which, whilst not technically less than ‘good’ because it hadn’t previously been inspected, had nonetheless never received an official rating of such. The principal of this academy agreed to participate (and the academy was rated ‘good’ in its inspection the following month).

The fifth category was teaching schools. These were selected because they represent the latest and most high-profile version of a long-standing tendency in education policy to create network leaders and promote school improvement through these. They are a development of such non-curricular high-performing specialisms as the Training School, Leading Edge and RAPP programmes, with elements of the later and currently extant National Leader of Education programme through the explicit headteacher criteria for qualification. Since there were a number of faith schools amongst the population of teaching schools, I selected actively for them in order to cover both categories with one school. This produced two schools, between which I chose by throwing a die. The first leader to whom I wrote replied that she would participate.

The sixth category was free schools. These were selected despite a certain amount of ambiguity in their definition and composition (see chapter four). Legally, they are simply academies, although in practice the appellation appears to refer only to new academies, i.e. those not replacing a former maintained school. This definition also covers converters from the independent sector. Within it, there are free schools sponsored by chains, community, business interest, public sector, parent or religious groups. For sampling purposes, I decided not to be too concerned with the sub-type, since for me, the principal, defining reason for free schools’ existence as a coherent type is that they offer something new to non-fee-paying parents. I nonetheless explore separately two sub-types of free school; studio schools and UTCs (see below). This is because they have been successfully branded as distinct, and one of the
definitional dimensions of my mapping is branding. There were insufficient free schools in the target urban area to compile a short-list, and so I located the population using data available from the DfE. I ordered my three choices according to distance from the target urban area, and was successful in securing the participation of the third nearest.

The seventh category was studio schools. I wanted to include these in the study because they represent a triumph of branding. They are legally an academy chain, all studio schools being established by the same trust, yet unlike academies run by other such, they have succeeded in becoming so distinctive that they qualify in policy discourse as a distinct type. Additionally, their commonalities, particularly concerning the curriculum and pupil selection, illuminate the ‘problem’ in education which they exist to solve. This discursive construction interests me immensely as a policy scholar. The trust website referred to above yielded just one in the urban area, and so I extended the search geographically to include adjoining local authorities, producing my second and third choices. My letter to my first choice went unanswered; my follow-up phone call revealed that the leader had left, and that there was an interim principal in post for an indeterminable period. I judged that situation too precarious even for a study exploring flux, and emailed my second choice, who agreed.

The eighth category was University Technical Colleges (UTCs). These are identical in status to studio schools; a creation of effective branding. The differences lie in the specifics of the curriculum and the target pupil: expected to leave with mostly level three rather than level two qualifications, these children are technically minded but academically more able. UTCs continue a long-standing attempt to develop technical capacity in the workforce. This incarnation interests me because, along with studio schools, it constructs children as having pre-determined, fixed capacities and aptitudes cast nonetheless as potential which the comprehensive system has failed to develop. That ever-finer distinctions between target groups of pupils should appear aligns with my interpretation of these newer school types as brands, seeking not so much pupils as markets in the sense of a group of consumers sharing characteristics which render it susceptible to that brand. The website referred to above which belongs to the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, sponsor of all
UTCs, produced just one in the target urban area at that time, and that was not yet open. Its leader was nonetheless already in place and agreed to participate.

The ninth and final category was Pupil Referral Units. These were selected because they comprise about 10% of the total number of educational establishments for secondary-age pupils in my target urban area, and yet have been discursively under-represented until recently, when a new Alternative Provision Academy type was created to cater for newly urged conversions from this sector. It seemed reasonable to assume that these pressures to convert in a perhaps unexpected sector, or to compete with converters, along with the raised policy profile of PRUs and their inclusion into the mainstream of educational debate, would constitute a distinctive and interesting set of issues for a PRU’s leader at this moment. To obtain my short-list, I first filtered out all those PRUs from LAs already represented in my sample. I then removed PRUs with an Ofsted rating of satisfactory or worse, since I was interviewing leaders of schools rated good in other categories where these had been inspected. I also removed those schools dealing uniquely with pregnant girls, which weren’t typical of the population, and then finally those schools with fewer than 50 pupils. This was to establish a degree of parity with other leaders in the sample whose understanding and experience of the organisational and operational aspects of leadership were developed from and predicated on their headship of a reasonably sized school. These filters produced three schools, which I ordered randomly. The first two failed ever to respond to my calls, and didn’t have a website through which to contact them. The third invitee agreed after a receptionist gave me a direct email on which to reach her.

References


## Appendix B: Preliminary Typology tabulated by legal status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Community Special</th>
<th>Foundation (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</th>
<th>Foundation Special (without a foundation)</th>
<th>Voluntary-aided</th>
<th>Voluntary-controlled</th>
<th>Maintained Nursery</th>
<th>Federation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-type</td>
<td>Most are structured according to pupil age; see table below.</td>
<td>Majority governance trust or Qualifying foundation schools: Where the instrument of government specifies that the majority of governors are foundation.</td>
<td>Includes many former grant-maintained schools.</td>
<td>Includes some former grant-maintained schools.</td>
<td>Most are religious. Most RC schools are VA. Includes some former grant-maintained schools.</td>
<td>Most are religious. More than half of CoE schools are VC.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>May comprise, for instance, different phases or a stronger with a weaker school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding status</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>Partly maintained (by LA) with other costs met by foundation (including 10% capital costs).</td>
<td>Maintained (by LA). Some delegated capital.</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Extant? indicates whether the type is currently in use.
- Funding status describes the financial arrangement for the school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Community Foundation (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</th>
<th>Foundation Special (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</th>
<th>Foundation (without a foundation)</th>
<th>Foundation Special (without a foundation)</th>
<th>Voluntary-aided</th>
<th>Voluntary-controlled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance (New regulations came into effect for new governing bodies from Sept 2012 and to all from Sept. 2015: the following applied until then.)</td>
<td>9-20 members. At least 1/3 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3, inc. HT), 1/5 LA, at least 1/5 community.</td>
<td>9-20 members. At least 1/3 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3, inc. HT), 1/5 LA, at least 1/5 community.</td>
<td>GB registered as a charity and has either minority or majority trust members who are appointed by the partner(s) in the foundation. (For non Qualifying FS) 9-20 members: at least 1/3 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3 inc. HT), at least 1 LA (but no more than 1/5), at least 1/10 community, at least 2 (but no more than 45%) foundation/partnership. (For Qualifying FS) 11-24 (for primary with sponsors), 11-28 (for secondary with sponsors). At least 1 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3 inc. HT), at least 1 LA (but no more than 1/5), at least 1/10 community, and foundation governors must outnumber the others by up to 2.</td>
<td>As trust, but GB places normally filled by trust representatives are filled by partner organisation representatives. 9-20 members: at least 1/3 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3 inc. HT), at least 1 LA (but no more than 1/5), at least 1/10 community, at least 2 foundation or partnership (but no more than 1/4).</td>
<td>10-24 members (primary, if with sponsors) 10-28 (second., same): at least 1 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3 inc. HT), at least 1 LA (but no more than 1/10 community, at least 2 foundation or partnership governors, and foundation governors must outnumber the others by two. Community governors unnecessary.</td>
<td>9-20 members: At least 1/3 parent, at least 2 staff (but no more than 1/3, inc. HT), 1/5 LA, at least 1/5 community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce employed by</td>
<td>LA, though GB has de facto responsibility.</td>
<td>LA, though GB has de facto responsibility.</td>
<td>Governing body.</td>
<td>Governing body.</td>
<td>LA, though power often devolved to GB.</td>
<td>LA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay and conditions</td>
<td>Statutory terms and conditions.</td>
<td>Statutory terms and conditions.</td>
<td>Statutory terms and conditions. Where religious (not possible for foundation special), the GB may select up to 20% of staff including HT according to suitability to teach RE.</td>
<td>Stat. &amp;c. Where relig., GB may discrim. on faith in emplymnt of all Tch &amp; Sup stff where occup. requ’d.</td>
<td>Statutory &amp;c. Where religious, GB may discriminate on faith grounds for up to 20% of teaching staff.</td>
<td>Statutory terms and conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Community Special</td>
<td>Foundation (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</td>
<td>Foundation Special (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</td>
<td>Foundation (without a foundation)</td>
<td>Foundation Special (without a foundation)</td>
<td>Voluntary-aided</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable to</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA must pick up the pieces in case of failure. Some accountability to trustees (investigate their duty to intervene).</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power resides with</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Trustees (for QF schools) control the GB, which can propose alterations or closure on condition of trustee agreement. LA can propose only enlargement, extra SEN provision, VI form provision or closure.</td>
<td>No-one has overall control of the GB.</td>
<td>As trust schools. Trustees control the governing body.</td>
<td>No-one has overall control of the GB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets owned by</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Charitable foundation (the trust).</td>
<td>Charitable foundation (the trust).</td>
<td>Governing Body.</td>
<td>Governing Body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student selection</td>
<td>LA is the admissions authority. Must act in accordance with Admissions code and School Admission Appeals Code.</td>
<td>LA is the admissions authority. Admission is through statement of need, except for emergency placements.</td>
<td>GB is the admissions authority. Must act in accordance with Admissions code and School Admission Appeals Code. Where religious, GB may prioritise pupils of that faith. May also prioritise all places according to child’s faith if oversubscribed. If under, they must admit anyone applying.</td>
<td>GB is the admissions authority. Admission is through statement of need, except for emergency placements.</td>
<td>As trust schools.</td>
<td>LA is the admissions authority. As trust schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community Special Foundation (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</td>
<td>Foundation Special (with a foundation; also known as Trust)</td>
<td>Foundation (without a foundation)</td>
<td>Foundation Special (without a foundation)</td>
<td>Voluntary-aided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May simultaneously be</td>
<td>Specialist school; teaching school; training school; federation.</td>
<td>Specialist school; teaching school; training school; federation.</td>
<td>Specialist school; teaching school; training school; federation.</td>
<td>Specialist school; teaching school; training school; federation.</td>
<td>Specialist school; teaching school; training school; federation.</td>
<td>Investigate: can it be in a federation? Does it have a different legal status to a community school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must not simultaneously be</td>
<td>May not be designated with a religious character.</td>
<td>A Faith School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May not have a religious character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Secondary Modern</td>
<td>Secondary Technical</td>
<td>Grant-maintained</td>
<td>City Technology Colleges</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-type</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Replaced underperforming urban school. May be in chain or dyadically linked to sponsor.</td>
<td>Converted/ opened from 2010 with a sponsor. May be in chain or dyadically linked to sponsor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant?</td>
<td>Legally no, but in de facto existence in LAs retaining selection.</td>
<td>No. Few were ever realised.</td>
<td>No. Converted en masse to Foundation, FS or VA status.</td>
<td>Yes, though most have converted to Academy status.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding status</td>
<td>Maintained by LA</td>
<td>Maintained by LA</td>
<td>Directly from central government through (from 1993) the Funding Agency for Schools.</td>
<td>Directly from central government (Education Funding Agency)</td>
<td>Directly from central government (Education Funding Agency) with additional funding from sponsor arranged through Funding Agreement. Included two million pounds of capital investment from sponsor.</td>
<td>Directly from central government (Education Funding Agency).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Secondary Modern</td>
<td>Secondary Technical</td>
<td>Grant-maintained</td>
<td>City Technology Colleges</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Governing Body</td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>1996 Act</td>
<td>With business sponsors.</td>
<td>The academy trust appoints the GB. No maximum size for GB and must</td>
<td>Has a management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>precise nature</td>
<td>provided for</td>
<td></td>
<td>include at least two parent governors and the HT. No more than a third</td>
<td>committee which acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'clusters' of</td>
<td></td>
<td>of governors can be academy staff, and there can be no more than one LA</td>
<td>like a GB, and a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>schools sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>governor. No stipulation about number of sponsor governors, but the DfE</td>
<td>Teacher in Charge,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GM status with</td>
<td></td>
<td>expects where there is a sponsor for these to make up a majority.</td>
<td>similar to a head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>one GB, and for</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups of trusts may collaborate formally by setting up an Umbrella Trust</td>
<td>teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a 'promoter'</td>
<td></td>
<td>(UT), or one Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) may govern a chain of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(sponsor) to</td>
<td></td>
<td>academies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>establish GM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>status (from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce employed by</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Governing Body.</td>
<td>GB</td>
<td>Academy.</td>
<td>LA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay and conditions</td>
<td>Subject to</td>
<td>Subject to</td>
<td>Able to set own.</td>
<td>Able to set own.</td>
<td>Able to set own terms and conditions. Staff transferring from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>statutory terms</td>
<td>statutory terms</td>
<td>terms and</td>
<td></td>
<td>predecessor school protected by TUPE. If religious, may discriminate in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and conditions.</td>
<td>and conditions.</td>
<td>conditions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>employment of all teaching staff. Staff not obliged to hold QTS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Freedom to set</td>
<td>Freedom to set</td>
<td>Subject to</td>
<td>See table 1 in chapter 2.</td>
<td>Free from National Curriculum, save English, Maths, Science and ICT.</td>
<td>Exempt from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>own curriculum.</td>
<td>own curriculum.</td>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obliged to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which includes English,</td>
<td>National Curriculum,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maths, Science, RE, and may emphasise the specialism.</td>
<td>but meant to offer a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>precise nature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>broad curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable to</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Secretary of</td>
<td>Sec. of State.</td>
<td>Secretary of state, though if an academy fails, then LAs have a</td>
<td>LA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power resides with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State.</td>
<td></td>
<td>statutory duty to provide an education for its pupils.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Secondary Modern</td>
<td>Secondary Technical</td>
<td>Grant-maintained</td>
<td>City Technology Colleges</td>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets owned by</td>
<td>GB.</td>
<td>GB.</td>
<td>Academy trust.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student selection</td>
<td>GB was admissions authority and could set own criteria.</td>
<td>Aptitude 10%.</td>
<td>GB is admissions authority. 'They have the right to reserve a tenth of places for those with an aptitude in their specialism' (Astle &amp; Ryan, 2008: 5). For religious, as new academies.</td>
<td>New faith academies may select 50% of the faith. Converters may select up to 100% if over-subscribed. For specialisms, as first-wave academies.</td>
<td>New faith academies may select 50% of the faith. Converters may select up to 100% if over-subscribed. For specialisms, as first-wave academies.</td>
<td>LA is admissions authority. Pupils offered a short-term place for reasons including pregnancy, social and emotional problems, exclusion from mainstream schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May simultaneously be</td>
<td>See sub-types.</td>
<td>No other type.</td>
<td>Technical Academy; AP (alternative provision) academy; free school. See table below.</td>
<td>Technical Academy; AP (alternative provision) academy; free school. See table below.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must not simultaneously be</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Appendix C: Preliminary Typology by specialisation, “customer” selection and branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Comprehensive</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Specialist and High Performing Specialist</th>
<th>Nursery; Infant; Junior; Primary; Middle; Secondary; All-through</th>
<th>Training School</th>
<th>Teaching School</th>
<th>Studio School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statutory underpinning</strong></td>
<td>Circular 10/65, but in existence before then.</td>
<td>Has roots in earliest forms of public schooling in the country.</td>
<td>Middle schools underpinned by The Education (Middle School)(England) Regulations 2002. All-through schools not defined legislatively.</td>
<td>Education Act 2011</td>
<td>Legally based on academy model. Teachers (Learning coaches) not required to have QTS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extant?</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes. Six open, a further 12 approved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As statutory type, plus extra funds attached to specialist status.</td>
<td>As statutory type, plus extra funds attached to specialist status.</td>
<td>As statutory type plus extra funds attached to status to discharge responsibilities.</td>
<td>As academies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Customers”</strong></td>
<td>All children.</td>
<td>A certain number of places (depending on school’s legal status) is reserved for children sharing its religious character.</td>
<td>Up to 10% of pupils can be selected according to aptitude in the specialism. (Same for academies with a specialism.)</td>
<td>Children of a certain age, though with conditions afforded by legal status.</td>
<td>Primary customers are student teachers and the HE providers they are gaining their accreditation through.</td>
<td>Responsibility to improve prof. and leadership development across a network of schools: these schools are the customers.</td>
<td>Pupils who have more aptitude for vocational modes of learning. Can start at age 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distinctive feature(s)/branding</strong></td>
<td>Academic mix of pupils (not always realised).</td>
<td>Religious character.</td>
<td>Specialist curricular area meant to infuse the wider curriculum and ethos.</td>
<td>Not distinctive, save all-through schools.</td>
<td>This model was based on the specialist school model, with ITE as the specialism. A pre-cursor to the teaching school.</td>
<td>These schools are meant to represent the best in the system, with outstanding Ofsted ratings both overall and in teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Vocat. emphasis, strong links with business, integral work experience, vocational exams (and EBACC), longer days &amp; terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Specialist and High Performing Specialist</td>
<td>Nursery; Infant; Junior; Primary; Middle; Secondary; All-through</td>
<td>Training School</td>
<td>Teaching School</td>
<td>Studio School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>National curriculum, but with an emphasis on the specialism. Normally higher targets in this area. Meant to infuse the ethos and teaching methods of the school more widely.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>Vocational means of delivery; see above. Taught through projects. Academic subjects still taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May simultaneously be</td>
<td>Maintained or academy.</td>
<td>VA; VC; academy; foundation; grammar?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must not simultaneously be</td>
<td>Grammar or selective academy. A so-called comprehensive may be a de facto secondary modern if a grammar exists nearby.</td>
<td>Any type of community or special school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Maintained grammar</td>
<td>Free school</td>
<td>Maintained boarding</td>
<td>Technical Academy</td>
<td>Alternative Provision (AP) Academy</td>
<td>University Training School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-types</td>
<td>Some grammar schools are independent. SSFA defines a grammar school as maintained; Comm./VA/VC/F.</td>
<td>Often particular in ethos according to nature of ‘promoter’.</td>
<td>May be comprehensive, academies, or grammar schools.</td>
<td>Most common model is the University Technical College.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant?</td>
<td>Yes; 163</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Maintained: LA and delegated capital</td>
<td>As academies.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>As academies. Sponsored by a uni and employers.</td>
<td>As academies, but other schools and LAs will buy their services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Customers”</td>
<td>LA is the admissions authority. Selects up to all pupils on the basis of high academic ability.</td>
<td>Unlike acads which selected before conversion, FS cannot select accg to ability.</td>
<td>Varied.</td>
<td>Children aged 14-19 with a technical aptitude.</td>
<td>Students unable to access mainstream provision; behaviour, young mothers etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive feature(s)/ branding</td>
<td>Selection according to high ability.</td>
<td>Supposed to fulfil local demand for alternative provision.</td>
<td>Pupils pay only for the boarding costs, not the tuition.</td>
<td>Technical employer and university involvement producing work-ready pupils.</td>
<td>A PRU with more autonomy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Same curric freedoms as acads. Cannot teach creationism as a scientific theory.</td>
<td>As statutory type.</td>
<td>UTCs have up to two specialisms. Technical education. Employers co-construct curric.</td>
<td>As for a PRU.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May simultaneously be</td>
<td>Must be one of the 4 types of maintained school above. Grammars converting to acads no longer legally recognd as G.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Must be an academy. May have a religious character.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must not simultaneously be</td>
<td>Maintained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintained. Cannot be a converter academy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Interview schedules

Round one focus: How you came to be the headteacher here.

1. Tell me how you came to be the headteacher of this school.
   a. Is this your first headship?
   b. How long have you been a headteacher?
   c. What type of schools have you worked in before?
   d. Tell me about a key moment which made you think you wanted to be a headteacher.
   e. What made you apply for a post in this type of school?

2. How have you come to be this sort of headteacher?
   a. Have there been significant people in the schools where you’ve worked who have influenced your professional identity?
   b. Can you give an example of how they influenced you?
   c. Has becoming a headteacher changed how you see yourself?
      i. In what ways?
   d. What are the differences between being a teacher and a headteacher?
   e. Were you well-prepared?
      i. By the National College?
      ii. By NPQH?

Round two focus: What it is like to lead this type of school.

1. (To all participants) What do you have to do well to lead this type of school successfully?
   a. What qualities do you have which help you lead this type of school?
   b. Can you describe an experience you’ve had during your headship which you think tells me about your values?
c. Can you describe what you are doing when you feel most like a headteacher?
d. Has your leadership always been like this?
e. If not, what has changed it?

With the principal of an academy/free school (including faith school converters)

2a. What have been the main changes in relation to your change of status?

a. Does each member of staff here have QTS?
   i. Do you think that is important?
   ii. Why (not)?
   iii. What about principals?

b. Can you give an example of how you have used your freedoms with staff’s pay and conditions if you have done so?
   i. If you haven’t, why is this so?

c. What difference has it made that you are funded directly from central government?

d. How has the constitution of the governing body changed?
   i. What is your relationship with the governors?
   ii. (for sponsored academies) What is it like to deal with a sponsor?
   iii. Can you give an example?

e. Have you taken advantage of your freedom over the curriculum?
   i. How?
   ii. Why (not)?

f. How has it been to leave local authority control?
With the headteacher of a non-academy faith/LA-controlled school

2b. How do you lead within the statutory framework for this type of school?

a. Do you think it is important that each member of staff have QTS?
   
i. Why?

ii. What about headteachers?

b. Would you like to have more autonomy over staff’s pay and conditions?
   
i. Why (not)?

c. What are the main benefits and challenges of your being funded through the local authority?

d. What is your relationship like with the governing body?
   
i. Can you describe an experience you’ve had with them which illustrates your relationship?

ii. (for non-academy faith school) What difference does it make to your leadership to have church representatives on the governing body?

e. Would you like to have more autonomy over the curriculum?
   
i. Why (not)?

f. What is it like to remain under local authority control?

3. (All participants) What do you see as your main objectives as headteacher here?

a. Why do you say that?

b. How do you want children here to be different when they leave from when they arrived?
i. In what ways does being an academy/free school/LA-controlled school, etc help or hinder you in achieving this?

1. e.g. LA/ sponsor/curriculum/staff pay and conditions/funding

c. What sort of structural or cultural changes are you leading in the school?

i. Why these in particular?

ii. In what ways does being an academy/free school/LA-controlled school, etc help or hinder you in achieving this?

1. e.g. LA/ sponsor/curriculum/staff pay and conditions/funding

4. How has your experience of leadership changed since your last school?

a. Have you been a head or deputy in another type of school?

i. Which type?

b. How have your objectives for the school changed since then?

c. What used to help you to lead the school, but which doesn’t so much now?

d. What used to hinder you in leading the school, but which doesn’t so much now?

e. Has how you see yourself as a headteacher changed since you were in that post?

i. How?

ii. Why do you think that is?

f. Has the role of the LA in your leadership changed?

i. Can you give an example of how?
g. Has the existence of academies/free schools etc in your community changed the way you see or practise leadership?
   i. Can you give an example of how?

h. How has the role of governors changed?
   i. How has funding changed?
   j. What do you think is the effect of these changes?

Round three focus: **What has changed over the year and how you understand your leadership within the wider system.**

1. **What changes have happened in or to the school or you over the last year?**
   a. Have there been any proposed changes to the status or type of this school since our last conversation?
      i. If so, what has prompted these discussions?
      ii. What is your position on this?
   b. What new demands have been asked of you as headteacher since we started these interviews?
      i. Why have these come about?
      ii. How do you feel about that?
   c. Have any events had an impact on your leadership here?
      i. Local or political?
   d. How has your relationship with your sponsor/trust evolved over the year?

2. **What has been the impact of school type diversity on your leadership?**
   a. Have any new types of school opened or been proposed nearby?
   b. If so, how has that affected your leadership of this school?
c. Do you feel as if you are in competition with others in the community?
   i. What have you done to promote your school?
   ii. How has this sense of competition affected how you perceive your role as leader?

d. Do you support other schools?
   i. If so, can you give an example of something you’ve done?
   ii. What was the reason for this support?
   iii. Do you tend to give more support to other academies/faith / LA-controlled schools?

e. Some in the press or even government caricature this sort of school as bog standard or constrained by the LA (LA-controlled)/ intolerant and illiberal (faith schools)/ the Secretary of State’s pet project (academies and free schools). Have these characterisations influenced the way you practise leadership?
   i. Or the way you see yourself as a leader?
   ii. Or the way your school is perceived in the community?

3. What, at the end of our interviews, are your final reflections on headship?
   a. If you could go back and have your time again, what would you do differently?
   b. What metaphor would you use to describe how you have been as a leader?
      i. What makes you say that?
   c. What do you think the future holds for this type of school?
      i. Why do you think so?
   d. Would you consider moving to a different type of school?
      i. Why (not)?
e. How are those new to headship different from you when you started?
   i. Why do you think that is?

If the leader has changed schools

f. What made you want to move schools?

g. Was the fact that this is a ... school important in your decision?
   h. Why?
   i. Can you describe an experience you’ve had leading here which illustrates the differences between this sort of school and your last one?
   j. Can you describe an experience you’ve had leading here which illustrates the similarities between this sort of school and your last one?
Appendix E: Participant information sheet / consent form

Investigating school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux.

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a PhD project. This research seeks to understand and explain what it means to be a headteacher in an educational landscape characterised by school diversity, competition and flux through interviews with headteachers. The outcomes will form the basis of conference papers, articles published in academic journals and will contribute to the award of the researcher’s doctorate degree. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

*Steven Courtney, School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, University of Manchester, Manchester.*

Title of the Research

*Investigating school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux.*

What is the aim of the research?

*This study focuses on how headteachers construct their identities and practise leadership in a system which is increasingly characterised by diversity, competition and flux. It aims to provide an understanding and explanation of headteachers’ experiences of leadership in this diverse, competitive and changing landscape, how they understand leadership and how they construct their professional identities.*
Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are the headteacher of a school whose characteristics constitute a ‘type’ which forms an important part of the English educational landscape.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You would take part in three audio-recorded interviews, each of about an hour. The first of these would be in April 2013, the second in January 2014 and the final one in September 2014. In these interviews, I will ask you a series of questions about your career journey, your experiences of leading your school and what it means to you and your professional identity, and how you understand your leadership within the wider national context. There is a very small risk that talking about these themes inadvertently evokes disagreeable memories or emotions. You are free not to answer any question you prefer not to, or to withdraw from the study completely.

What happens to the data collected?

The data will be analysed and findings derived from it used primarily for the researcher’s PhD study. Findings will also be published as articles in academic journals and presented at academic conferences. The primary data will be destroyed five years after the confirmation of the degree, in accordance with university policy.

How is confidentiality maintained?

I will do my utmost to maintain confidentiality. I will use pseudonyms with all the data, both when it is stored and presented, and keep details of participants’ real names physically separate. Written data will be stored only on my computer at home in encrypted form. Audio data will also be anonymised, stored securely in an encrypted format on the researcher’s home computer and destroyed five years after the confirmation of the degree, in accordance with university policy.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to
take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I shall ask you at the beginning of each of the three interviews if you still consent to participate.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There is no funding for payment of participants.

What is the duration of the research?

3 x 60 minute interviews

Where will the research be conducted?

The interview will take place either in a public building, your usual place of work or the university, depending on mutual prior agreement.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Findings will be published in peer-reviewed publications and presented at conferences.

How will I access the results of the research?

I will produce a summary report along with the main thesis. This summary report will be emailed to all participants (or posted, at their request) on completion of the research.

Contact for further information

I can be contacted for more information by email:
(steven.courtney@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

What if something goes wrong?

Should you want help or advice during the research project, you can contact me through the means given above.
If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Investigating school leadership at a time of system diversity, competition and flux.

CONSENT FORM

If you consent to participate please initial each box and sign the form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers.

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic
books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person taking consent</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven Courtney</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Application for authorisation to submit an alternative-format thesis

Steven Courtney  
Student ID: 7685573

Sent by email to: steve.courtney@manchester.ac.uk

19 November 2014

Dear Steven,

Application: Alternative Format

I am writing to you regarding your recent application to change your mode of study. The Director of Postgraduate Research, Professor Kevin Woods, acting as the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Committee of the School of Environment, Education & Development has considered your case and has approved your request to submit a thesis in Alternative Format.

Please note that before you can submit your thesis you must give Notice of Submission at least 6 weeks before the submission date. The Notice of Submission form is available online via eProg, which you can access with your normal University username and password at:

https://app.manchester.ac.uk/eprog

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please contact your divisional administrator.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Kubiena  
Senior Postgraduate Research Administrator

Cc Helen Gunter  
Mel West
Appendix G: List of documents used in mapping the landscape of provision

Academies Act 2010


256


Education Act 1870

Education Act 1944, c. 31

Education Act 1980, c. 20

Education Act 2002, c. 32

Education Reform Act 1988, c. 40

257

Equality Act 2010, c. 15


258


261


School Standards and Framework Act 1998, c. 31


269


West, A. (2014). Academies in England and independent schools ( fristående skolor ) in Sweden: policy, privatisation, access and


