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Intellectual histories of school leadership: implications for professional preparation

Abstract

The shift from professional preparation for headship to leadership training in England is the site for the presentation and deployment of a framework for constructing intellectual histories of school leadership. The framework has been developed based on research undertaken in the past decade through conducting independently funded social science projects. The reading of field outputs combined with fieldwork data has produced a five-part framework that examines knowledge traditions, purposes, domains, contexts and networks. In using this framework to examine the intellectual history of the field in England I identify certain key trends in England, where I consider the implications of this about, with and for the profession and for further research both in England and in other contexts.

Keywords: school leadership, intellectual histories, leadership training, leadership preparation

Sammendrag

Det skiftet som har funnet sted i England når det gjelder innholdet i og organiseringen av skolelederopplæringen, danner utgangspunktet for en presentasjon av et teoretisk rammeverk som kan hjelpe oss til å forstå utviklingen av skoleledelse som intellektuelt felt over tid. Rammeverket er basert på forskning om skoleledelse i en engelsk kontekst i løpet av de siste ti årene og består av fem kategorier som er gjensidig knyttet sammen: Kunnskapstradisjoner, kunnskapsformål, kunnskapsdomener, kontekster og nettverk. Ved hjelp av disse kategoriene identifiseres sentrale trender i utviklingen av skoleledelse som intellektuelt felt i England. Avslutningsvis vises det til implikasjoner om, med og for profesjonen og for videre forskning både i England i andre kontekster.

Nøkkelord: skoleledelse, forskningsfeltets intellektuelle historie, ledelsestrening, ledelsesutdanning

Introduction

Professional preparation for teachers to take up formal positions regarding knowledge and skills for the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, and/or organisational matters concerning staffing, budget, processes and outcomes is a site of on-going research and analysis within nation states and globally (e.g. Lumby et al., 2008). Increasingly this professional preparation is focused on the construction and enculturation of professional roles, identities and practices as ‘leader’, ‘leading’ and ‘leadership’ (e.g. Gunter, 2001). Forms of ‘leaderisation’ of the profession and schools has forced a shift from professional agency to prepare and develop understandings of educational roles towards the structuring impact of training and licensing for reform delivery and audits. Various schools across the globe are increasingly populated by *all* who are deemed to *be* leaders (student, teacher, instructional, middle, senior, assistant), who *do* leading (thinking, talking and acting as leaders) and who *exercise power* as leadership (taking a position to control the thinking, talking and actions of those who are deemed followers). Such radical changes are being mapped and the implications for practice examined (e.g. Thomson, 2009), and in order to support researching professionals in schools, colleges and universities, and professional researchers in universities, think tanks, and consultancy companies, I have developed and deployed a framework for the construction of intellectual histories.

The framework covers: *Traditions* or the ideas available; *Purposes* or the intentions underpinning the access and use of those ideas; *Domains* or the positions taken regarding change; *Contexts* or the situation in which ideas and purposes that produce positions for change are located; and *Networks* or the interconnections between field members in government, schools, communities, families and wider civil society (see Gunter, 2016). The framework has been developed through access to field outputs and published codifications of intellectual histories globally, and by using data and conceptualisation from a range of independently funded social science projects (see Gunter, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2016). The framework has the potential to be used to think about, design and generate a range of intellectual histories, and as such the contribution is *about*, *with* and *for* the field, by not only enabling understandings of identities and practices within a historical context, but also through providing access to a range of knowledges and projects. In this article I intend presenting and examining the potential in the framework through using it to think about the reform processes in England. I make a case for how the strategies, technologies and claims made in support of the reforms are based on the control of the intellectual history of the field, and increasingly by those outside of the profession. Notably there has been a shift from preparation to training, and I make a case for examining this in England because major reforms over four decades continue to have global influence. This generates important questions for researching professionals and professional researchers in other sites (e.g. in

education and non-education organisations, in nation states, in supra-national institutions) regarding how the framework can be used (challenged, developed, superseded) to identify and open up for critical scrutiny the origins, purposes and impacts of intellectual resources that are available and offered to the profession. This further enables the values position regarding the control of knowledge claims that underpin the purposes of education and educational practices to be examined, whereby the intellectual nature of professional practice can be juxtaposed with the globalised trends towards routine delivery and data driven audits.

Leaders, leading and leadership in schools in England

England is an important site to examine who leaders in schools are, what they do that is deemed to be leading, and how leadership as a power process is exercised. England has been a location for the development of intellectual resources (e.g. Baron & Taylor, 1969), the critical examination of professional roles and practices (e.g. Hughes et al., 1985), the recording of professional experiences and the relationship with knowledge and skills (e.g. Ribbins, 1997), and debates about what changes mean (e.g. Gunter & Thomson, 2009). In addition, those who brought the study of professional practice into higher education networked and sought to understand best practice elsewhere (e.g. Glatter, 1972), where from the 1980s onwards England has been seen as a radical reform laboratory that has global reach and significance in regard to innovation for the school system and what this means for professional roles. Importantly the world has visited England, where researchers have bid for and won commissioned evaluation projects for the government (e.g. Leithwood & Levin, 2005), and external organisations have sought ideas and confirmation of change processes (e.g. Pont et al., 2008). England has visited the globe through the colonization of other systems with improvement and effectiveness researchers impacting on strategic reform agendas (see Gunter, 2012). In summary, over the past fifty years there have been major changes for the profession through the leaderisation of schools and the system in England:

Strategies: there are three main intentions for the adoption of leaders, leading and leadership:

Educational leadership: leadership is directly linked to educational purposes and practices. Trained and accredited educational professionals in schools and local authorities work on developing pedagogy and the curriculum, with a focus on learning and achievement;

School leadership: leadership is directly linked to organizational purposes (planning, human resource management, marketing, budgets). Trained and accredited educational professionals in schools and businesses (e.g. entrepreneurs, philanthropists, consultants) work on the organizational

efficiency and effectiveness of schools to deliver data driven outcomes from pedagogy and the curriculum;

Leadership of schools: those who work in schools (e.g. teachers, principals, children) may use titles and the language of leader, leading and leadership but in reality they tactically implement externally designed and regulated change. Power lies elsewhere, and leadership strategy is determined and controlled by political and economic elites outside of schools (e.g. entrepreneurs, philanthropists, consultants, government ministers and civil servants) who network with preferred elites in civil society (e.g. faith groups and trusted education professionals) to deliver their preferred outcomes (see Gunter, 2005, 2016). All three are currently visible in schools in England through complex layering, but with a long-term trend away from educational leadership towards a hybridized version of school leadership and the leadership of schools. Head-teachers do less and less teaching, and are more focused on delivering national reforms to secure organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and the job is open to those who are not formally trained or accredited in education.

Technologies: there has been a shift from preparation and development as *within service* professionals with a range of short and longer term programmes designed with and provided by local authorities and higher education, towards the codification of selected knowledge that is trainable in a linear form of career stage accreditation underpinned by clear statements of standards. This can be illustrated by an incremental shift from educational administration as the label for study and practice of the conditions in which pedagogy and the curriculum are developed by autonomous educational professionals towards the school as a business that needs to be led and managed by an entrepreneurial headteacher (see Gunter, 2004). Consequently the field in England tends to be known as *Educational Leadership, Management and Administration* (ELMA) (or other configurations of the three descriptors, e.g. EMAL). The 1988 Education Reform Act accelerated this through the introduction of site-based management, whereby educational professionals managed income generation and the budget, hired and fired staff, and had to market provision within a quasi-competitive system. Management was conceptualised at the time as policy and strategy in the way that managing directors and CEOs conduct business, and so administration was relegated to clerical work. From the 1990s leadership adopted this approach with its emphasis on visioning, with management downgraded to product supply and monitoring, and where historical resources were written out of the training script (Gunter & Thomson, 2010). Entrepreneurial leadership training has enabled the privatisation of schools to rapidly unfold, whereby Courtney (2015) has identified between 70 and 90 different types of schools in a competitive market place.

Claims: the leaderisation of education in England is based on the declaration of a causal link between headteachers and student outcomes (e.g. DfEE, 1998, see Gunter, 2012). Such assertions underpin on-going shifts from professional

(teacher, head of faculty, deputy headteacher, headteacher) towards organizational delivery titles (middle leader, emergent leader, national leader, system leader) with moves detected from the dropping of 'headteacher' towards the adoption of 'principal' or 'chief executive'. The hierarchical pyramid division of labour has been strengthened, with leader, leading and leadership increasingly connected with entrepreneurial identities and practices (Grace, 1995), whereby the definition of the field has shifted from including everyone from children, parents and teachers through to ministers (Baron, 1969) towards a narrow 'business' field of those deemed to be 'relevant' as practitioners and those who directly enable delivery (parents as consumers, sponsors as entrepreneurs or as values based faith groups). Business informed Transformational Leadership has had global impact (e.g. Leithwood et al., 1999) in education, and this has impacted directly on professionals in England (see Gunter, 1997, 2001, 2014). A form of *Regulated Transformational Leadership* (RTL) has been developed where 'change' imperatives and strategies are controlled elsewhere (centrally through national policy, and increasingly through private philanthropists and consortia), and where the 'headteacher' acts as a proxy for on-going, close-to-practice, regulatory control of 'change' within the organization. The 'headteacher' has to restrict student outputs and data in order to comply with national regulation through testing and inspection, and so entry and exit of students and staff is tightly managed (Courtney & Gunter, 2015). The corporatization of education is evident in the framing of education as a product that is delivered and then measured through national testing, and this is regulated through national standards that are published with schools rank ordered in league tables and graded through inspection audits. The 'headteacher' has to run an efficient and effective business, and as an entrepreneur can generate business cultures and dispositions in the workforce, students and parents. This person as the chief executive can run other 'schools' within the locality or chain. Hence others in the organization can 'step up' to the challenge of the principal working off site, and so can be formal leaders, do leading and exercise leadership with strong performance and accountability processes.

The interplay of these reform strategies, technologies and claims within policy texts and legislation has generated a complex picture of how 'headteachers' have read, interpreted and positioned themselves. Evidence shows a fluid and complex picture, with some who leave and take early retirement, some who collaborate, some who oppose and some who are ambivalent and who try to negotiate their way through (Gunter & Forrester, 2009). There is no complete or secure model of RTL, not least because there is evidence that 'headteachers' can and do present themselves in a range of ways to different audiences. Narratives show how they have worked for educational change in ways that go against the grain (e.g. Winkley, 2002), but increasingly this looks like another age because the book shelves are dominated by victory stories by those appointed to turn around schools identified as failing (see Clark,

1998). Significantly, some have made corporatised policy work (e.g. Astle & Ryan, 2008), not least through the adoption of marketised school improvement (e.g. Crossley, 2013), and their shift to business consultancy (e.g. Collarbone, 2005).

In order to examine the strategies (the shift from educational to school leadership, and the leadership of schools), the technologies (from preparation and education to training and accreditation/licensing), and the claims (from providing public education to causally delivering externally determined student outcomes) there is a need for research. There is a strong tradition in England of projects that seek to examine the realities of professional practice (e.g. Hall et al., 1986) through to critical analysis that relates such practices to wider power processes (e.g. Ball, 1990). The research which underpins my contribution is located in primary independently funded projects conducted over the past decade (e.g. Gunter, 2011, 2012a, 2014, 2016; Gunter et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2012). Such projects have generated a database of over five hundred policy texts; empirical data sets of over three hundred interviews; a library of over a thousand published outputs; and thinking tools based on Bourdieu's sociology and Arendt's political analysis. Based on a meta-analysis of data from these projects I have developed a new and innovative approach to the description, meaning and explanation of the ideas underpinning leaderisation, the intellectuals who have variously developed and popularised these ideas, and the practices of those who have codified and engaged with them. This framework for constructing intellectual histories is about, with and for the profession, where I use the term 'field' in the Baron (1969) tradition of including all from children and families through to professionals in schools and within government and wider civil society.

The framework has five main inter-connected features, where I focus on:

Traditions: ideas as the intellectual resources for the field and that structure the field: *Experiential, Positivist, Behaviourist, Values, and Critical*.

Purposes: the intentions, rationales and narratives regarding how and why traditions are accessed: *Situational, Functional, Realist, and Activist*.

Domains: the position outcomes that come from the inter-play between Traditions and Purposes: *Philosophical, Humanistic, Instrumental and Critical*.

Contexts: the political, economic, social and cultural situation in which ideas and actions interplay in regard to the structuring of the knowledge domains, and so I present four main contextualising structures: *Civic Welfarism, Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism and Elitism*.

Networks: the interconnections between individuals and groups regarding traditions, purposes and domains to position take within structuring contexts: *Educational Administration, Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research, Entrepreneurs and Popularisers, and Critical Education Policy and Leadership Studies*.

A full explanation of the origins and development of this framework is available (see Gunter, 2016), and here I now intend deploying this framework to examine the intellectual history of school leadership in England.

An intellectual history in England

The development of the framework is based on the interplay of ideas, intellectuals and practices, and hence in this discussion I intend drawing on what is regarded as integral to professionalism, why and who says:

Traditions: all four *Knowledge Traditions* are available and evident within the field in England: first, there is *Experiential* based on contemporary and historically located accounts of doing the job and learning from those you work with, particularly through learning how not to do it (e.g. Peters, 1976), with an increase in professional autobiographies (e.g. Goddard, 2014) and accounts of how to do the job better (Barry & Tye, 1975); second, there is a *Science Tradition* with both *Positivism* and *Behaviourism*, and this is evident in the Taylorism underpinning production targets and data, and the Human Relations thinking underpinning capability claims about teams, collaborative cultures, and consultation, where quality processes have impacted (Sallis, 1993); third, there is a *Values Tradition* located not only in what made the field distinctive in England compared with the dominance of the Theory Movement in North America, but also through how the Greenfield challenge spoke more clearly and was better received (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993); fourth, there is a *Critical Science Tradition* within practice and higher education research, and research partnerships, with work that not only raises concerns about the *Knowledge Traditions* as outlined above (e.g. Gunter, 1997), but also investigates justice regarding the exercise of power and the way this impacts on access to and the role of leaders in educational organisations (Fuller, 2015).

Field historiography shows how the focus is usually on the *Experiential Tradition* as the usual starting point for accounts with questions about the necessity, type and processes of intervention (e.g. Taylor, 1973). Such interventions from within policy, higher education, and local networks show how practice can be based on *Positivist and Behaviourist Science* and *Values Knowledge Traditions*. However, the main trend has been to focus on ‘what works’ without an explicit or full location within a tradition, though it is still possible to see links to *Positivism* and *Behaviourism*, with some humanity through references to *Values*. Consequently, the field is dominated by (a) how-to-do-it ‘programmes’ in texts, software, and training that focus on ‘hot topics’ and provide the busy practitioner (not necessarily a qualified educational professional) with clear instructions and guidance on how to deliver externally determined reforms; and (b) the sharing of know-how through such ‘programmes’ between practitioners – ‘this worked for me and so why don’t you

try it', and through accessing trusted people who know-better through their location in the private sector, not least consultants who work for major companies who have business ready templates (on strategy, human resources, change) that can be applied to schools as business, and/or who were formally local authority advisers or headteachers and are now promoting leadership products as like-minded people who are committed to helping former colleagues (see Gunter & Mills, 2016).

In summary, while *Knowledge Traditions* within the field show plurality with a range of activity taking place, the dominant model of RTL is located in forms of *Experiential* knowledge, knowing and know how, where interventions to improve practice are located in identity changing packages that are derivative of and deliver conformity to corporate requirements. In this sense the field lacks an overt intellectual history, where the debates of Baron and Taylor (1969) regarding the social sciences and the pioneering work about seeking to understand practice and the importance of values (e.g. Ribbins, 1997) have been marginalised or even lost. Those practitioners who seek such forms of knowledge by reading, undertaking postgraduate study and in partnership with higher education gain access to a range of knowledges that enable a critique of RTL and the development of other ways of knowing. This is evident in texts (e.g. Arrowsmith, 2001) but it is also often under the radar as the wider context can be condemning of professionals who retain and develop autonomous and inclusive forms of *educational leadership*.

Purposes: all four *Knowledge Purposes* are available and evident in the field in England: first, there is *Situational* that is concerned with 'what happens here' and the reflexive learning in response to the outcome, where everyday pragmatism can be an important rationale for decisions and actions, and where more dramatic events require 'best' pragmatic ways forward (see McNulty, 2005); second, there is *Functional* that is concerned to make the organisation work more efficiently and effectively, where the removal of dysfunction – often identified by outsiders through national standards lists of competences – is a key aim (see Goddard, 2014); third, there is *Realist* where people in different parts of the system give accounts and understandings of work, and the challenges between what is the case, how values matter, and what ought to be the case (see Arrowsmith, 2001); and fourth, there is *Activist* where practice is linked to social justice issues which are located in decisions and actions around the situation, functionality and values (see Winkley, 2002).

The emphasis on the *Experiential Tradition* means that *Situational* and *Functional Purposes* dominate. Importantly the rationales tend to be around *Delivery* and *Localising*, with narratives that are *Instrumental* and *Biographical*. In this way the *Outcomes* tend to be framed around *Satisfaction* (or indeed relief to have survived another inspection or to have recruited enough students to be economically viable) with the use of data to provide *Measured* accounts. Democratising *Rationales* are in evidence, where heads talk about inclusion and

participation, and so *Outcomes* are not just about *Satisfaction* and *Measured* data, but also about *Inclusivity* where the opportunities to extend involvement in new and vital ways is recognised (see Gunter, 2012a; Raffo & Gunter, 2008).

While *Critical Science* research gives accounts of the challenges and indeed traumas that headteachers go through (e.g. Thomson, 2009), in general published accounts tend to focus on compliance (e.g. Robinson, 2011) or at most the ‘wobble room’ that people seek when trying to interpret what a new reform means for them and/or the school (e.g. Bottery, 2007). In this sense the rise of distributed leadership as the ‘hot topic’ of the last decade tends to be more promoted than evidenced, where independent research shows how issues of distribution tends to be engaged with by ‘headteachers’ on their terms (see Hall et al., 2011, 2012). This is not a criticism because as Wallace (2001) has shown the idea of distribution at a time of high stakes performativity is dangerous. For example, Hall et al.’s (2012) project about the discursive construction of distributed leadership shows clear evidence that the single leader is intact and all matters of functional delegation is based on protecting and enhancing data production in order to demonstrate school effectiveness. Putting schools under the spotlight through major reforms and inspections, through projects that aim to target schools that are not doing well enough, and through new forms of schools that need evidence to prove they are meeting national standards, generates purposes that are narrow and exclude the types of professional values that *Critical Science* identifies as threatened but in remain in evidence (see Courtney & Gunter, 2015).

In summary, *Knowledge Purposes* within the field show plurality with a range of claims within rationales, narratives and outcomes, where the model of RTL is located in mainly *Situational* and *Functional Purposes*. Following Fay (1975) we live at a time of technological and procedural politics, where the answers to questions of standards are deemed obvious, and if there is a need to link to knowledge then it tends to be to *Positivist* and *Behavioural Sciences*. So the emphasis is on getting the job done to the satisfaction of outsiders – from Inspectors to Consultants to Ministers to Philanthropic sponsors. Sometimes there is tension and contradiction, that in Fay’s (1975) terms could be identified and resolved through *Interpretive* and *Critical Science* research, but the ‘crises’ continue and almost seem to be necessary in order to justify RTL. This is evident in, for example, the purchasing of consultants to prepare for inspection and to help to repair following the inspection, with espoused purposes that tend to be evident in claims around delivery and localisation rather than democratic opportunities (Gunter & Mills, 2016). Examining the purposes of education in ways other than producing children as a work ready labour force is challenging, and seen to be largely irrelevant as it is corporate purposes that dominate.

Domains: change as integral and endemic in education is a key focus of field concerns in England, where all four *Knowledge Domains* are available and evident: first, there is *Philosophical* based on *Knowledge Traditions*, and

Purposes that generate debates about understanding change and what it means (e.g. Winkley, 2002); second there is *Humanistic* that is focused on capturing the experience of change and how it might be understood (e.g. Ribbins, 1997); third, there is *Instrumental* that is focused on how change can be delivered with evidence of compliance (e.g. Day et al., 2009) and/or normative exhortations to make approved of changes (e.g. Harris & Lambert, 2003); and fourth, there is *Critical* that is located in different ideological positions regarding the state, where right wing accounts focus on radical changes to remove the state and politics from education provision (e.g. Tooley, 2000); and left wing accounts that focus on radical changes to how corporate interests now have a dominant position (e.g. Ball, 2007).

The argument made so far is that research evidence about the field in England shows an on-going concern to make interventions into the *Experiential Tradition*, particularly through the decorative legitimacy of *Positivist* and *Behaviourist Sciences*, but mainly through the promotion of identities and ways of working that are corporate and based on common sense and advice from those who are located here – breaching a professional form of experience with a trade form of experience. Such business experience may be derived from the *Positivist* and *Behaviourist Sciences*, but this is not necessarily translated and could be misrecognised. Hence, as already shown, the purposes of using *Knowledge Traditions* is for *Situational* and *Functional* matters with *Rationales*, *Narratives* and *Outcomes* that are concerned with *Localised Delivery*, *Instrumentality* with a combination of proof through data, and with *Satisfaction* about *Outcomes* located in a respite moment before the whole process starts again. Hence the dominant *Knowledge Domain* is that of *Delivering Change* with emphasis on instrumentality and evaluation, where the field is replete with texts about the effective leader (e.g. Crossley, 2013), some with how the evidence base inter-connects (e.g. Smith & Bell, 2014). While there is a strong tradition of *Living Change* with some work on seeking to *Understand Change*, this has lost ground in the past decade where collaborative projects between professional researchers and researching professionals have not been a strong feature. *Working for Change* has remained in evidence, where the right-wing have enabled *Delivering Change* as a means (at least in the short term) to the removal of the state from educational provision. The left approach to *Working for Change* is strong within higher education (e.g. prestigious research grants, chairs and outputs) and in partnerships with the profession (e.g. through talks, rallies, and in postgraduate teaching and supervision) where it does not aim to impact directly on government policy or supply government intellectuals.

In summary, *Knowledge Domains* within the field show plurality of ideas, positions and intentions within the field, but where the dominant model of RTL is located in the methodologies of mainly *Delivering Change* with an emphasis on instrumentality of ‘doing it’, sometimes with evaluations of how such doing is compliant with reform remits but often packaged with exhortations to do what

has worked in the corporate world. This focus underpins training and other forms of knowledge exchange, and in doing so it can prevent educational professionals from seeking intellectual sustenance from the other *Knowledge Domains*, and indeed, can make such work seem irrelevant and dangerous. Successive UK governments from the 1980s onwards, may see other *Domains* but there is a tendency to demonstrate a strategy of ignoring other forms of *knowledge*, ways of *knowing*, *knowers* and *knowledgeability*, or when it is in front of them it can be ridiculed. Importantly many in government do not see it, because the ontology and epistemology underpinning this type of knowledge production actually denies access to other forms of knowing – other types of questions and methodologies are not known, and perhaps cannot be known (Willmott, 1999).

Contexts: all four *Knowledge Contexts* are available and evident to understand and explain the dominance of particular *Knowledge Traditions*, *Purposes* and *Domains* within the field in England: first, there is *Civic Welfarism* located in legislation and reforms in the 20th Century, and at the time of writing is evident in the continued existence of publicly funded education under local authority control, with the common school at primary and secondary school giving universal and free-at-the-point of delivery access to all abilities and responding to all aspirations; second, there is *Neoliberalism* located in the challenges to *Civic Welfarism* through reforms in the late 20th and early 21st Century concerned to outsource provision to private business/interests, and to allow private/business interests to provide new forms of schooling/education, and to require residualised state provision to be subject to business structures, cultures and practices; third, there is *Neoconservatism* that has a long history and reaches back to before state involvement in provision in the 19th Century, and is concerned to protect particular traditional interests, particularly in regard to faith, to the curriculum, pedagogy, and the conduct of staff and students; and, fourth, there is *Elitism* which is located in particular social groupings, interests and cultures that is variously classed, raced and gendered, and is directly opposed to the democratisation project underpinning *Civic Welfarism*, and therefore tends to ally with the economic and social interests and power structures that enable the endurance and influence of *Neoconservatism* and *Neoliberalism*. Historically, concessions by the ‘Establishment’ of elite interests has been a feature of reform, alongside philanthropic good works, not least how concerns in the face of poverty and disadvantage means that something may need to be done to ameliorate the situation (Miliband, 1973). There are also times when even this is pulled back, when things may have gone too far, and where Ranson (1994) quotes a civil servant in saying in the face of civil unrest in areas of unemployment and poverty in the early 1980s: “if we have a highly educated and idle population we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place” (p. 241).

The dominance of *Neoconservatism* in ‘alliance’ with *Neoliberalism* is evident in the shift to parental choice, and accountability mechanisms that promote common sense and decency above the democratisation of knowledge production. Over the past forty years there has been push back on the post-war achievements through: (a) the de-professionalisation of those who teach, assess, and control the curriculum; (b) the emphasis on conduct (e.g. student behaviour and uniform) as a means of controlling and disciplining; (c) the return to the autonomous independent school as the model for effective delivery, with schools enabled to leave local democratic control for corporate and faith control; (d) commodification of education through parental preference for the school of their choice, the niche marketing of the national curriculum through specialisation and faith distinctiveness, and the focus on the design and production of performance data as the proxy for quality. The *Elitist* leader centric culture underpinning RTL fits with the demands for clarity over who the local moral guardian is for neoconservatives and with the demands for entrepreneurialism for the neoliberals, and while there can be tensions between values and materiality they can be ‘managed’ through role models, victory stories, contract renewal/termination, and shifts in emphasis from time to time. While change must be delivered, it must be the right type of change. The relationship between these larger narratives and the day to day practices of educational professionals and researchers is evident in *Critical Science Research* about education in general and school leadership in particular (e.g. Ball, 2010; Gunter 2012a; Grace, 1995, 2008) but seems to be eschewed by those who are deeply located in *Neoconservative*, *Neoliberal* and *Elitist* agendas (e.g. Hopkins, 2007).

In summary, while there is plurality of *Traditions*, *Purposes*, and *Domains* within and for the field, the identification of ideas and the intentions for using them within methodology is shaped and influenced by major narratives about the relationship between the state and civil society. In England the dominance of private interests in business, faith, and social elites speaks to and encourages simulation from those outside, and so the language, notions and demands for choice, beliefs, and discipline have resonated and impacted. RTL has been created by this form of ‘aspirational mimicry’ and the development of RTL has created the situation that has enabled it to be sustained, packaged and repackaged. Challenges remain for this model, not only from the existence of plurality within knowledge production in the field that continues to demonstrate that there are other forms of transformation that need engaging with, but also how such a model is not successful on its own terms (Barker, 2005). The notion of transformation, while corporatized, is a space where other forms of educational transformation can slip under the radar, not least moves to give recognition to a more diverse society (Lumby & Coleman, 2007), and the retention and development of partnerships based on research (Wrigley et al., 2012).

Networks: the four *Knowledge Networks* are evident within the field in England:

Educational Administration is located historically through links with North America and Australia in particular, with an emphasis on professional experiences and development (Bush et al., 1999) and with the development of an evidence base (Hall & Southworth, 1997). The network of professional researchers and researching professionals is primarily located within the British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society, with associated Journals, Conferences, Research Interest Groups, and Special Interest Groups in the British Educational Research Association.

Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research is global, where improvement work is strongly connected with North America and Australia, and effectiveness is strongly networked with Europe. There is a particular emphasis on change, where leadership is identified as key to the process of change (e.g. Stoll & Fink, 1996) and to effectiveness of change (e.g. Sammons et al., 1995). The network of professional researchers, and through particular projects such as *Improving Quality of Education for All* with researching professionals (e.g. Jackson, 2000), is primarily located in 'centres' within higher education and the *International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement*, with associated Journals, Conferences and Groups.

Entrepreneurs and Popularisers are located globally through business, and what Thomson et al. (2014) have identified as the *Transnational Leadership Package*, where *Educational Administration* and *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research* members are also associated through networks and collaborative projects, with cross-overs between school and higher education with private consortia and consultancies (e.g. Crossley, 2014; see Gunter & Mills, 2016). There are links with formal networks such as the British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society, but such research associations can be eschewed in favour of business links, consultancy reports, and templated knowledge production.

Critical Education Policy and Leadership Studies is global and historically located through links with all continents. There is an emphasis on scrutinising knowledge production and critically evaluating the other networks outlined (Ball, 2010; Gunter, 1997; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003), alongside recording and enabling alternative approaches regarding power to be made public (Wrigley et al., 2012). The network of professional researchers, researching professionals and communities is primarily located in higher education, and in partnerships with the profession, communities and political activists. There are Research Interest Groups in the British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society and the British Educational Research Association, with Journals, Conferences and Rallies.

The construction, reconstruction and dominance of the RTL within and for education is a product of how *Neoliberalism*, *Neoconservatism*, and *Elitism* have

worked within these various networks in England. While all four networked groupings have an espoused commitment to the development of practitioners in relation to student achievement, it is primarily the *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research*, and the *Entrepreneur and Populariser* networks where the strong collaborations have been made, but with some cross-overs and links with *Educational Administration*. Professional profiles are not necessarily linear, where responsiveness in relation to new project tenders is seen as vital in a market situation. Treadmill commissioned research enables the bottom line in a university or consultancy company to be taken care of, but can mean that the implications of knowledge production are not fully engaged with. When such projects are mapped and analysed, it is the case that these networks focus on the individual person as the leader, and have worked to combine and recombine the idea of transformation with various models such as distributed and instructional leadership. The taking of office in 2010 by the Coalition as an espoused Neoliberal-Neoconservative government has impacted on this, as the privileged role of *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research* in relation to the previous New Labour governments (e.g. winning of research contracts, close advisory networks) has been dismantled and these networks are now mainly influential through the cross-over into EP networks, particularly through a shift to consultancy. Indeed a situation is emerging whereby analysis by Rowan (2002) of marketised school improvement in USA is now closer to application in England than it was pre 2010.

What distinguishes researchers in the *Critical Sciences*, who are primarily located in the *Critical Education Policy and Leadership Studies* networks, is that research with and for practitioners is located in the inter-relationship between practice and the social sciences, and in questions of diversity and equity as an educational process. The exposing of the limitations of *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research*, and *Educational Administration*, with links to non-educational interests through *Entrepreneurs and Popularisers*, is a strong feature in regard to the failure to examine and take into account the real conditions in which educational professionals, children and parents are located, and the challenges of choice and consumerism (e.g. Thrupp, 2005). In addition, the approach is to position educational professionals as intellectuals who can and do find social science methodologies and social theories helpful to both understanding the situation they are in, and to work for alternative forms of schools within communities (e.g. Taysum & Gunter, 2008). Contributions are around children and their place within leadership processes (e.g. Fielding, 2006), and through examining how power processes work in ways that are classed, raced, gendered and sexed (e.g. Courtney, 2014). There are important roots for *Educational Administration* in regard to the social sciences (Baron & Taylor, 1969), and debates about theory (Hughes et al., 1985) but these needed the security of *Civic Welfarism* in order to flourish, and the divide within the field between policy and practice (Glatter, 1979) impacted on access to and

engagement with particular knowledge resources. While professionals as intellectuals is a strong feature of *Critical Education Policy and Leadership* networks, the disconnection of the profession from research in favour of common sense and what works (see Gunter, 2001) through *Educational Effectiveness and Improvement Research*, and *Entrepreneurs and Popularisers*, means that it is those who have related leaders, leading and leadership with the corporatisation of policy that have retained a sense of an intellectual contribution.

Based on this deployment of the framework it is safe to conclude that the intellectual health of the field in England is simultaneously fragile and strong. The latter is located in the production and deployment of the best way of doing things as procedural forms practice (box ticking compliance), but this is precarious because it is not successful in its own terms, and is disconnected from the intellectual work that might focus on practice differently (see Barker, 2005). This is not a new assessment (e.g. Thrupp & Willmott, 2003), where a major concern is how research is funded mainly from commissioned projects and private philanthropy. In addition, the field is known for a strong dependence on studies undertaken for Master's degrees by professionals, and while this is important work there are issues about the scope and scale (Fitz, 1999). Consequently the design of studies tends to be directly linked to government policy strategies at national policy level and how professionals responded to this at school level. I can identify only three projects about educational and/or school leadership and/or the leadership of schools funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (see Gunter & Forrester, 2008; Hall et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2009), and so only a small amount of research is taking place that examines professional practice through deploying social science methodologies and conceptual tools. In addition, research for and the writing of intellectual histories within and for the field in England is the preoccupation of a few people, where accounts of field development are available (e.g. Gunter, 1999, 2012a, 2012b), along with celebrations of key anniversaries (e.g. Strain et al., 1999) and stock take reviews of field knowledge claims and developments (e.g. Bush et al., 1999; Reynolds, 2014).

While those who have had involvement in government policy are raising questions about what is being done, with suggested alternatives: as parents (e.g. Benn, 2011), as researchers (e.g. Mortimore, 2013; Pring, 2013), and as union leaders (Bangs et al., 2011), it is the case that those directly involved in reforms (e.g. Adonis, 2012; Hyman, 2005) have retained their positioning in spite of research that suggests otherwise (e.g. Alexander & Flutter, 2009; Gunter, 2011). In other words, as yet there has been no version of Ravitch's (2014) analysis about educational reform in the USA for England, where as a reform insider turned outsider she examines the limitations of much of what she previously enacted and supported.

Summary

This article has provided a strategic approach to outlining an intellectual history of school leadership, where the deployment of an inclusive framework in the school system in England has generated understandings of plurality, but how exclusionary trends have generated narrowly framed ‘how to do it’ recipes for effective and efficient corporatised practice. The field could be characterized as anti-intellectual through the RTL as a form of disciplined pragmatism – the ‘headteacher’ can do, as long as the ‘headteacher’ does as required and delivers the right type of data. What does this mean? For the field in England it means there is a need for researching professionals and professional researchers to confront the limitations of knowledge production processes. This means not only to have and seek access to the plurality of knowledges and ways of knowing, but also to question who controls knowledge production and who determines what is worth knowing and why. Importantly, this also requires recognition of how and why reform strategies, technologies and claims are increasingly being controlled by those outside of schools, outside of public education, and outside of the nation state. This raises questions about preparation, and whether plurality can be codified to produce ‘what works’ prescriptions that can be trained or whether a different form of learning is needed in order to enable the professional to be able to scope, access and use a range of evidence and ideas that can connect and challenge their experiential knowledge with educational values and practices.

This contribution has the potential to support primary research in other contexts (within and across organizational and national borders), and while the framework has been deployed in this particular article through the nation state, the globalized nature of knowledge tourism and travel means that the potential exists to think differently about the construction of intellectual histories within and beyond formal frontiers (for example, see Gunter, Grimaldi, Hall & Serpieri, 2016; Gunter, Hall & Apple, 2016). Indeed there are accounts by headteachers in other parts of the world (e.g. Addison, 2009; Evans, 1999) and from primary research (e.g. Lingard et al., 2003; Thomson & Blackmore, 2006) where similar evidence and concerns to the situation in England are presented about changes to identity and the disconnection of professional practice from educational values and purposes.

Therefore the framework for constructing and using intellectual histories has potential beyond the analysis contained here, and so I would identify three important contributions for the field to consider: first, intellectual histories *of* or *about* the field – examining the ideas, intellectuals and practices in regard to leaders, leading and leadership enables an intellectual history of a field to be scoped and constructed, where changes such as the shift from preparation and training can be charted and explained; second, intellectual histories *with* the field

– professionals (and other interested people) can work with researchers to not only access and critically examine histories but also ask searching questions about the intellectual health of knowledge production and its relationship to professional status and practice; and, third, intellectual histories *for* the field – where recognition and the outlining of the plurality of the field for the field means that professionals can know about and so access a range of knowledges, ways of knowing and knowledge actors that official training and trainers may exclude or even demonise.

Considering the interplay between intellectual histories of, with and for the field is helpful because at a very basic level the professional will attend training sessions and be offered readings to do throughout their career, and so there is a need to examine the intellectual work that has produced the claims made in presentations, publications and websites – what are the intellectual origins of the approach being offered? What is the evidence base? Who are the researchers that produced this new model of leadership and how was their project funded? What alternatives are there and why are they not appropriate at this session? Within practice the professional will at various times seek advice regarding a problem that may be beyond their routine, and so their experiential and situational knowledge developed over time may need new insights in order to understand what a problem is and how they pose questions and develop strategy. So: what knowledges do they turn to? What ways of knowing do they use? Who do they turn to? And, how do they recognize, access and engage with the plurality of intellectual resources for a very demanding intellectual decision-making process? These are crucial questions that the framework can inform and enable, and can help to enable agendas for the conceptualization and design of professional development.

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