

School governance and neoliberal political rationality: what has democracy got to do with it?

To appear in J. Collet-Sabé and A. Tort (eds.) *Governanza escolar democrática*. Morata: Madrid. Forthcoming

To be translated into Spanish:

Wilkins, A. (2015) *Gobernanza escolar y la lógica de la política neoliberal. ¿Qué puede hacer la democracia?*. In J. Collet-Sabé and A. Tort (eds.) *Governanza escolar democrática*. Morata: Madrid. Forthcoming

Do not quote without permission from the author.

Introduction

In this paper I discuss the role of school governance in England with a particular focus on the changing responsibilities of school governors in relation to recent education policy. These issues are located through a broader discussion of 'neoliberalization' and the incursion of market forces on public sector organisation. Here neoliberalization is defined as the double movement by which public services and servants are removed from direct government control and bureaucracy, and at the same time enfolded through new relations and practices of steering and facilitation involving the dispersal and intensification of arms-length regulatory instruments (inspection, surveillance, professionalisation and accountability, to name a few). This is what Kikert (1991) calls 'steering-at-a-distance' and Du Gay (1996) describes as 'controlled de-control'.

Drawing on these insights, I demonstrate how a neoliberal political rationality shapes school governance and the kinds of behaviour and orientations idealised and adopted by school governors seeking to make themselves and the schools they govern accountable. Finally, I show how school governance is wedded to a politics of exclusion and inclusion (a preference for 'high calibre' governors over 'amateurs' for example) underpinned by interrelated movements of professionalisation, technicity of knowledge and appeals to experts and expertise. This raises questions over who gets to influence school governance and what governance is for, as well as bringing into focus larger questions about the role of democracy in school governance.

School Governors

In England school governors refer to volunteers (typically parent, teacher and community representatives) who work with members of the senior leadership team (headteacher, associate headteacher and heads of year) to oversee and monitor the school's financial and educational performance. Some school governors are elected (parent and teacher governors for example) and some school governors are appointed (community governors, usually those with experience in industry and business). The majority of schools in England have a school governing body (an admixture of school governors and senior leaders) who meet regularly to discuss a variety of educational, technical and finance matters concerning curriculum, budget control, admissions, strategic planning, payroll and premises management, human resources and safeguarding. These arrangements apply to most types of state-funded primary and secondary schools, including further education (FE) colleges (post-compulsory educational institutions). Some school governing bodies retain more freedom and responsibility than others, however.

In the case of free schools and academies (state-funded schools operating outside the control of local government) the school governing body enters into a funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) which is responsible for state-funded education and children's services in England. The members of the school governing body in effect retain freedoms and flexibilities over the delivery of the curriculum, setting staff pay and conditions (pay spines and performance related pay), sourcing own suppliers and professional advisers (usually on the basis on competitive tendering), and changing the length of the school terms and school days. Many schools in England operate in this way: they are administratively self-

governing and accountable only to central government rather than local government and locally elected officials or local councillors.

In more traditional school setups, including maintained or community schools, where the school is financially regulated and supported by local government, the governing body does not retain legal responsibility for the school. The key difference between school governors working in academies and free schools and those working in maintained schools therefore is the degree to which school governors are held to account for the educational and financial performance of schools. Since the Coalition government came to power in 2010, the number of academies and free schools to open in England has soared. To put it in perspective, 203 academies opened under the previous Labour government between 1997 and 2010 (the original architects of the academies programme). Recent statistics indicate 3924 state secondary and primary schools have converted to academy status, 1105 schools have opened as academies under the guidance of a sponsor and 252 academy conversions were due to open on or around September 2014 (see DfE 2014a). The implications of 'academisation' (increased financial and legal responsibility for school governors to oversee and monitor the educational and financial performance of schools) are now evident through the plethora of disciplinary mechanisms now impacting the role and responsibilities of school governors. Discernible within government texts and speeches over the last few years has been a strong emphasis on the 'professional' character of school governors for example:

'GBs [governing bodies] have a vital role to play as the non-executive leaders of our schools. It is their role to set the strategic direction of the school and hold the headteacher to account for its educational and financial performance. This is a demanding task, and we think that anyone appointed to the GB should therefore have the skills to contribute to effective governance and the success of the school... This could include specific skills such as an ability to understand data or finances as well as general capabilities such as the capacity and willingness to learn' (DfE 2014b: 2:1)

'I'm certainly not opposed to parents and staff being on the GB, but people should be appointed on a clear prospectus and because of their skills and expertise as governors; not simply because they represent particular interest groups ... Running a school is in many ways like running a business, so we need more business people coming forward to become governors' (GUK 2013)

These discursive accomplishments can also be captured at the level of subjectivity, namely through the embodiment of governmental rationalities reflected in the changing responsibilities and behaviour of school governors. What can be witnessed in England at this time is a shift in the culture and orientation of school governance; a shift which demands skilled and 'high calibre' volunteers capable of upholding the 'culture of self-review' and 'professional ethos' (Nash 2014) now permeating the order of things. We might call this shift in culture the professionalisation and technicity of school governance.

School Governance

School governance refers to strategic focus of schools while school management refers to the operational focus of schools. Governance therefore is the domain of school governors and management is the domain of senior leaders (headteachers, associate headteachers, deputy headteachers, HR managers and finance directors). The official role of school governors today is to enhance accountability through the specification, codification and review of governing practices – that is, the practices by which financial and educational performance can be evaluated vis-à-vis set targets and national benchmarks. Academies and free schools are not entitled to support from the local government in the form of premises management, employment disputes and contractual issues, payroll and legal advice, for example. And many schools happily opt out of these arrangements and adopt legal responsibility for school processes and outcomes formerly managed by local government. Hence school governance today is strongly linked to activities involving budget control, data tracking and analysis, succession planning, resource allocation, performance evaluation or self-review, target setting, problem solving and risk management. This is the business of school governance.

The new culture of school governance resonates strongly with ideas and practices of New Public Management (Clarke and Newman 1997), namely the idea that organisations share characteristics which can be compared to measure cost effectiveness, effective allocation of resources, efficiency in processes and outcomes or performance. New 'rituals of verification' (Power 1997) are therefore at the heart of school governance. In much the same way that teachers are located through a culture of what Ball calls 'performativity', school governors similarly are summoned 'to organize themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations' (2003, 215). Understood in this way, school governors do not only embody elements of New Public Management (they operate as compliance officers working on behalf of the government, ensuring governing practices are specified and codified in ways that lend them to audit, measurement and comparison) but are themselves made to be the objects of new pedagogies of management and control. Their actions and judgements are located through new systems of representation in order that their contribution as volunteers can be differentiated, graded, measured, inspected and performance evaluated. Consider that school governors in England are located through a plethora of disciplinary and corrective technologies – external review, self-review, school inspection and professional training for example – all of which appeared unnecessary under the direction of the old culture of school governance. These changes to the culture of school governance echo and redeem elements of neoliberal political rationality.

Neoliberal political rationality

Brown (2006, 693-4) provides a useful definition of 'neoliberal political rationality' by way of Foucault. This is helpful for thinking about how volunteers are summoned and positioned as school governors:

'involves a specific and consequential organization of the social, the subject, and the state. A political rationality is not equivalent to an ideology stemming from or masking an economic reality, nor is it merely a spillover effect of the economic on the political or the social. Rather, as Foucault inflected the term,

a political rationality is a specific form of normative political reason organizing the political sphere, governance practices, and citizenship. A political rationality governs the sayable, the intelligible, and the truth criteria of these domains. Thus, while neoliberal political rationality is based on a certain conception of the market, its organization of governance and the social is not merely the result of leakage from the economic to other spheres but rather of the explicit imposition of a particular form of market rationality on these spheres. Neoliberalism as a form of political reasoning that articulates the nature and meaning of the political, the social, and the subject must be underscored because it is through this form and articulation that its usurpation of other more democratic rationalities occurs’.

In this sense neoliberal political rationality is not just something ‘out there’ – a form of ideology or discourse which imposes itself directly on subjects, forcing us to submit to its rules and obligations, though arguably it does this too. Neoliberal political rationality is a movement that provisionally achieves common-sense currency through saturating the field of judgement in which we negotiate claims to truth and inhabit and perform particular selves. As Brown (ibid) argues, neoliberal political rationality ‘governs the sayable, the intelligible’; it is something which is ‘external’ to the self but which is internalized as part of our behaviour, our psyche, our mode of reasoning. This is what Foucault (2008) termed ‘technologies of the self’: the ways in which socially circulating discourses shape and guide the formation of selves through the imposition of strictures and limits concerning what is morally responsible or reprehensible behaviour. As Cooper (1998, 12) argues, ‘governing at a distance operates by guiding the actions of subjects through the production of expertise and normative inculcation so that they govern themselves’.

In what follows I demonstrate how elements of neoliberalization, including the dispersion of regulatory mechanisms of school inspection, professionalisation and the technicity of knowledge, impact the role and responsibilities of school governors in England at this time. I will also consider how these trends in public sector organisation reproduce a politics of exclusion and inclusion that inhibits the scope for democracy in school governance.

Research Methodology

This paper draws on findings generated through research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, ref. ES/K001299/1) during October 2012 and January 2015. During that time data was collected across nine state-funded primary and secondary schools as part of an in-depth, multi-sited, case study investigation of school governance. The rationale for this investigation was shaped by some of the developments in English state education over the last four years, including the rapid expansion of academies and free schools, the ‘hollowing out’ of local government (or ‘dis-intermediation’, see Lubienski 2014) and the new regulations shaping the responsibilities of school governors. Specifically the research set out

1. To describe the ways in which senior leaders and school governors understand and perform governance, and the different forms of knowledge, skills and (claims to) expertise that shape dominant understandings and practices of governance.

2. To explore how different governance setups impact the role and responsibilities of school governors, and the extent to which influence over decision making is practised differently within these governance models; and
3. To capture the relations of accountability which exist (or do not exist) between school governors and different organizations and actors, and the mechanisms by which different accountabilities are enhanced.

The schools that were investigated varied according to their type, legal and governance setup, and were invited to participate in this study for this reason. I wanted to adopt a comparative approach which would enable me to explore and compare how governance is shaped by different organisational, social and geographical factors. For the most part this paper will focus on trends which were consistent across the sample of schools investigated in this research. The sample includes two free schools, three converter and sponsor academies, one foundation school and three community (Local Education Authority, LEA) schools. These schools are situated in London and a rural area of England which will remain unidentified through the use of pseudonyms, for example Canterbury, Montague, Wingrave and Richford. Different types and sources of data were collected and examined across these schools, including

- Telephone and face-to-face interviews
In-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 102 participants including senior leaders, school governors and parents.
- Observation material
Observations of 42 meetings were carried out, including observations of full governing body and committee meetings.
- Documentary evidence
Key governance documents were collected and analysed from each school. These documents included school improvement plans, governor induction packs, annual budget reports, governor school visit reports, minutes from meetings, headteachers report to governors, articles of association and assessment data.
- Literature review
A review was conducted of all relevant government and non-government (e.g. think tank, third sector, media and academic) texts relating to the policy and practice of school governance.

Professionalisation

Findings generated through the research suggest that an amateur/professional distinction is developing among many governing bodies in England, especially among schools looking to convert to academy status and acquire legal and financial responsibility for school processes and outcomes.

'I think a weak governing body is one who doesn't listen to the chairman or the headmaster or senior management team and what their opinions are, particularly the teachers and the senior management team and the headmaster. They are the interface between the pupils and the school governors, aren't they really, and we do need to, you know, we do listen to what they say, very much so, because they are the professionals. We are not

professionals. We are amateur I suppose really, trying to do a professional job'
(Gregory, LEA Governor, Wingrave)

'I think it's fair to say that the governors we've got would represent the higher end. So more affluent, professional classes, eloquent and articulate, which is why they are on the governing body in the first place' (Kelvin, Headteacher, Wingrave)

Similar to Wingrave, many of the school governors at Canterbury felt that a successful conversion to academy status would mean reconstituting, reorienting and reculturing the existing governing body, namely through downsizing, removing unwanted governors (referred to as 'deadwood' by the chair of governors) and introducing more 'professionals':

'I mean we've got one girl, now she is good, she works for the LEA and she has a child there so she understands what's going on. But what you've got there is someone who's professional and understands what's going on. And I'm not trying to knock governing bodies or governors or anything like that but I feel that governing bodies should be run by a series of professionals' (David, Community Governor, Canterbury)

'I think they [governors] are worthy people who want to show an interest. Emma [chair of governors] and I were talking about this yesterday actually. We don't have much strength on the governing body so there is a need to appoint a lot more people but trying to find people who've got the right sort of experience from industry, commerce, that sort of thing, who want to give the time, is quite difficult. But Emma has contacts in the business world so she is actively trying to recruit people' (Tim, Community Governor, Canterbury)

'Well, I mean the potential benefits [of academy conversion] are obviously greater autonomy, greater responsibility. You will be forced to pay a lot of attention to what the DfE say and what Ofsted say. You have scope to, as I say, professionalise the governing body, and that's the good side of it. The bad side of it could be that too much power could be concentrated in too few hands' (Mark, LEA governor, Canterbury)

Professionalisation can be equated to forms of depoliticisation (the removal of political control or influence over school processes) and re-politicisation (the introduction of new actors and knowledge as policy solutions). Professionalisation is often synonymous with practices of reculturing for example, and may include the active enlistment of school governors who demonstrate hard skills in marketing, finance, enterprise, data analysis and risk management as well as soft skills in negotiation, communication and networking. And there is a strong perception among school governors and school leaders today that financial and legal independence necessitates such a transformation in the culture of school governance. This means that the contribution of 'non-experts' (people who possess lay or non-specialist knowledge) may be undermined where demonstrable skills and experience fail to meet the new priorities and obligations that underpin academisation.

Professionalisation can also be linked to aspects of entrepreneurialism and the creation of resilient selves, namely people who are willing to actively work on their selves through training and upskilling, people who view problems as challenges and opportunities, people who are willing to adopt a positive attitude to change and risk

taking, and people who can relate to themselves and others as if they were a business. This has led some governors to be scornful of others for not trying hard enough or committing themselves properly to the new responsibilities of being a school governor:

We are all accountable. If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen! And none of this 'just volunteers' rubbish (School governor speaking on recent twitter exchange hosted by UKGovChat on the topic 'Accountability: who is answerable to whom?', see Storify 2013)

As stated in a recent draft of the School Governance Regulations (DfE 2013, 2), 'The governing body may only appoint as a parent governor [or partnership governor] a person who has, in the opinion of the governing body, the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school'. Commitment to the role of school governor is therefore insufficient in some cases since the role demands skilled professionals who can enhance accountability to the funders (the Department for Education) and to the regulatory body (the schools inspectorate, Ofsted). As Clarke (2009, 38) makes clear, 'we can see how this may structure who gets to enter into governance roles, with preference being given to those who are the bearers of such "relevant knowledge and expertise": legal and financial knowledge, business experience and so on ... Others – such as the bearers of lay knowledge, or tacit knowledge of how a service works (from the vantage point of either workers or users) – may find themselves marginalised in the "business of governance".'

Performativity

Introduced in 1992, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (or Ofsted, the schools inspectorate) was designed to identify school failure and enhance systemic improvements through regular inspection. Since 2010 Ofsted school inspections have tended to focus their attention on pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, and overall effectiveness. Under the scope of leadership and management, Ofsted are now required to make judgements about school governors' understanding and interpretation of school budget and performance data as well as their ability to challenge senior leadership and shape strategy. External pressure to enhance accountability to the funders, to the regulatory body and to parents as consumers means that Ofsted are keen to assess the capacity and willingness of school governors to discharge their responsibilities effectively. This has huge implications for the role and responsibility of school governors, as one governor wrote anonymously in a Times Education Supplement (TES, 2014) article:

It has brought some rigour to some of the scrutiny that governors must apply to their schools. The days of playing cheerleader for the staff and pupils are gone. But are we also "governing to the test" – to adapt a pejorative phrase – with issues as potentially troubling as those of a drill-and-kill approach in the classroom? There are numerous reasons to think so. But the one that strikes me most forcibly, as I try to learn by rote what evidence I have to prove that my interventions have helped drive up attainment, is this. Who in their right mind would subject themselves to such a regime?

School governors are, by definition, lay people, who govern, unpaid and in our spare time. By way of thanks, we are subjected to intense cross-examination, conducted by trained and highly experienced professionals. Fall short in these verbal duels and we are quite reasonably held to have let down our communities, and may well be pilloried in the local press.

Ofsted works to normalise and discipline certain orientations and attitudes among school governors as legitimate, intelligible or sayable. Much like the way in which school governor recruitment is circumscribed through a narrow, government focus on experts and expertise (desirable governors being those with particular skills, experience and know-how), school inspection works to sort and compare governors through increased visibility and surveillance. As Foucault argues (2009, 56), discipline 'normalizes' and 'of course analyzes and breaks down; it breaks down individuals, places, time, movements, actions and operations. It breaks them down into components such that they can be seen, on the one hand, and modified on the other'. In other words, disciplinary power works through 'a principle of compulsory visibility' (Foucault 1979, 187). Ofsted enhances visibility and governability of school governors by subjecting them to pedagogies of surveillance and control, for example. Ofsted therefore persists as an absent presence that is always-already implicated in the attitudes and orientations performed by many school governors:

'And also I think it's very important that the governing body knows the school in terms of, you know, data. Because that's what Ofsted want to focus on, is data. So a weak governing body will not understand the data or will just accept the data whereas a strong governing body will, you know, be looking at it and asking questions about it, saying well why is this trend happening or what are we doing about that particular blip that happened that year? You know, they will look at it and ask the question' (Katie, Parent Governor, Montague)

'It's got to a point now that schools are, you know, under a lot of pressure to improve, and Ofsted is hovering, has been for some years with a threat of Ofsted inspection, making sure you are improving' (Stanley, LEA governor, Moorhead)

'I think all these things they will have a greater impact, of course, when they think another Ofsted inspection is imminent. I need to look at it a bit more, in greater detail, and it's developed as we go through, so as we scrutinise things like self-evaluation' (Peter, Community Governor, Montague)

'What we've done since then is look at the names of the committees and the remit of the committees and tied them in much more tightly to the four Ofsted, the four key Ofsted judgements, which is why we have a teaching and progress committee, why we have a care guidance and support which is looking at behaviour and safety. And business management, you need somebody to look at the money and the people and the buildings' (Kelvin, Headteacher, Wingrave)

'You know we've had a recent presentation by Ofsted where it reinforced what our roles are, and the whole point about the inspection process, and kind of understand that, you know, there's an element of maintaining quality of provision and making sure all the people who speak out have the relevant

support. So assisting in the smooth running of the school and kind of auditing what goes on is kind of the main role that we have in our particular college, because ultimately we are responsible for what goes on, so we need to make sure that the right people are in the right place and it's done intelligently' (Nick, Parent Governor, Child's Hill)

Ofsted therefore exercises considerable influence over how school governors understand and practise their role. Increasingly governors self-evaluate on the basis of Ofsted-driven performance indicators, for example, and structure the terms of reference for different committees against Ofsted criteria.

Democracy and consensus

School governance is (ideally) consensus driven. In a typical school governing body a feedback loop exists where decision making is directed by agenda items or policy points that provide the framework for discussion. Committee groups meet regularly outside the full governing body to progress those items. Those items are amended according to the decisions of committee members and written up in line with statutory requirements and Ofsted criteria. These items are then presented to the full governing body as part of a consultation where decisions are challenged or approved and voted on. The role of the chair during a full governing body meeting therefore is to aggregate governor's preferences so that decisions can be made actionable and progressed to the implementation stage. But often decisions are committed to and sewn up in advance of the full governing body and this tends to frustrate governors.

'It's a funny situation working for T-ALK [academy sponsor] because actually the governing body has got very little power. I don't know if you've worked that out. Yes, so actually T-ALK hold all the strings, all the reins of power really, and in some T-ALK academies I'm not sure if they've even got a local governing body anymore' (Joanna, Headteacher, Richford)

'Well, they [decisions] are sort of presented as fete accompli [accomplished fact] during the meeting really but I've never had access to sort of main board minutes. I asked for them and similarly I've never seen committee minutes for committees that I don't sit on. So, you know, in a maintained school it's fairly standard that governors have access to all of that. As a matter of course they don't have to ask for it' (Angela, Parent Governor, Richford)

'In practice our local governing body do a lot of things that standard local authority governing bodies do but the difference is about their decisions making powers, because technically our LGB [Local Governing Body] don't have any. And that I think is where the confusion is open because what we've started to say to people coming into the network is basically you are not legally accountable but it only works if you feel fully accountable for that school' (Wendy, Governance Manager, T-ALK)

Some chairs appear to follow a tick box approach to governing for example, often unhappy sending action points back to committees for further discussion, in effect limiting the scope for deliberation and full participation of all members in the decision-making process.

'Certainly the decision about the additional deputy head was discussed firstly at chairs. Everything agreed and, you know, I did agree with the concept and I would look at it no differently whether I was a governor in the full governing body or on the chairs committee. And maybe some people would say it's a more streamlined, effective way of doing things. To me it's hierarchical and I don't like it. It means longer meetings, potentially, but ideas were discussed and I raised some concerns. Another governor raised some concerns and they were looked into and addressed. And when all of that happened it was then presented as a package to the full governors' (Ada, Parent Governor, Montague)

'Hugh's [chair of governors] philosophy is get all the stuff sorted out before the meeting and then the meeting is an opportunity to confirm things rather than a broader base for interrogation, especially the full governing body. Full governing body meeting has almost become a sort of, you know, just a confirmation of the existence of the committees and just bringing up any issues that have come out of discussions at the committees. That's how he's moved it. And that's fine by me. Shorter meetings are better for me but sometimes I would imagine that can be frustrating' (Eugene, Headteacher, Montague)

'I think there are lots and lots of things that are discussed in governing meetings that are kind of almost decided. Lots of things are going through the motions really so I don't really feel that I have a huge say in decisions sometimes. But not because I'm ignored, because there are lots of things, lots of decisions and conversations and things that are on agendas that are really a case of going through the motions rather than me being there to have a big input, either individually or from a staff point of view' (Timothy, Staff Governor, Montague)

School governance is shaped by consensus. School governors and senior leaders work together to decide and agree upon what is the appropriate terms of reference for a committee, what are the procedures for hiring and firing staff, what is most the effective way to spend the pupil premium, and so forth. But what also needs to be considered is who shapes and constrains the field of judgement by which consensus is arrived at. The above example shows a school that performs well in terms of budget control, risk management and educational attainment, but decision making is configured through vertical relationships rather than horizontal and participatory ones. And some would argue this is efficient – results are results, the DfE and Ofsted are happy, what matters is what works. Consensus is secondary to efficiency. A big concern for some senior leaders and chairs of governors for example is that full governing body meetings, because of their size and the participation of many people, are often impractical and counter-productive to the extent they must mediate too many voices, some with a 'hobby horse' or 'axe to grind'. (Hence school leaders talk passionately and enthusiastically about the apolitical nature of governing bodies, although in reality the power relations that shape governance are inherently political, wedded as they are to the government's performance agenda, to market and corporate measures of accountability, to limited conceptions of what counts as knowledge, and so forth). In effect the scope for value conflicts – disagreements about priorities or preferences, so important to linking school direction to the needs and aspirations of the community and to the wider public – become eclipsed by such concerns.

School governance and neoliberal political rationality

School governance may be viewed as a form of 'neoliberal govern-mentality' (Foucault 2008): the function of introducing additional freedom (school autonomy) through additional control and intervention (inspection, 'good governance', standardisation, professional culture, new forms of expertise and claims to knowledge). School governors are permitted some discretion and choice over how the school is run, but ultimately they operate within a very prescriptive national policy framework shaped by policy technologies and disciplinary practices limiting these freedoms in practice.

The development of school governance in England over the last four years may be considered indicative of how neoliberalisation functions successfully. Neoliberalisation entails a twin process of 'roll-back' (outsourcing public contracts to private companies, privatizing public assets and power, removing local authority support to schools, withdrawing direct bureaucracy, etc.) and 'roll-out' (introducing new legislation, accountabilities, guidelines and policy frameworks which work to steer and guide public institutions and public servants at a distance through the production of expertise and normative inculcation) (Peck 2010). In this paper I have highlighted the different ways in which processes of roll-back and roll-out are enacted in the context of school governance through a focus on trends on professionalisation, performativity and the technicity of knowledge.

The devolution of power from Whitehall to organizations, groups and individuals is a form of decentralisation which promotes the idea of school autonomy and freedom from central and local government. But schools are forced to operate within a highly prescriptive framework of national regulation, a 'shadow of hierarchy' (Jessop and Sum 2005, 369) which necessitates the expansion of accountabilities, new policy actors, new forms of knowledge, all of which are regarded as essential to site-based management and the new legal and financial responsibilities incurred through academisation. Academisation therefore opens up new spaces for the imposition of strictures, boundaries, limits, demarcations and, crucially, principles of visibility, responsabilisation and differentiation. As Fisher and Gilbert observe, 'Bureaucracy has become decentralized. It's not (just) something to which we are subject now; it's something which we are required to actively produce ourselves' (2013, 91).

School governance is shaped by elements of neoliberal political rationality in which democratic principles of inclusion, representation, participation and empowerment are (typically) rendered secondary to market principles of efficiency, value for money, technical knowledge and enterprise culture. Mouffe (1996, 255) argues 'In a democratic polity, conflicts and confrontations, far from being a sign of imperfection, indicate that democracy is alive and inhabited by pluralism'. Unfortunately it is routine for school governing bodies to shy away from engaging in dialogue which might facilitate the space for value divergences and value conflicts. This is because of the 'unwieldy' nature of democratic governance and its incompatibility with the smooth managerial oversight of the school and the demands and pressures that beset schools under the conditions of academisation.

References

Ball, S. 2003. The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18 (2), 215-228

Brown, W. 2006. American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization. *Political Theory*, 34 (6), 690-714

Clarke, J. and Newman, J. 1997. *The Managerial State*. London: Sage

Clarke, J. 2009. Governance Puzzles. In *E-Governance: Managing or Governing*, edited by L. Budd and L. Harris. London: Routledge, pp. 29–52

Cooper, D. 1998. *Governing out of order: Space, Law and the Politics of Belonging*. London: Rivers Oram Press

DfE (Department for Education). 2013. *The School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 – draft*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/maintained-school-governing-body-constitution-regulation-changes>

DfE (Department for Education). 2014a. Open Academies and Academy Projects in Development. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/b00208569/open-academies>.

DfE (Department for Education). 2014b. Constitution of GBs of Maintained Schools – Proposed Changes to Regulations. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270668/Constitution_of_governing_bodies_con_doc_final_draft.pdf.

Du Gay, P. 1996. *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London: Sage

Fisher, M., and J. Gilbert. 2013. Capitalist Realism and Neoliberal Hegemony: Jeremy Gilbert a Dialogue. *New Formations*, 80: 89–101

Foucault, M. 1979. *Discipline and Punish*. Harmondsworth: Peregrine

Foucault, M. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de Franc, 1978–79*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Foucault, M. 2009. *Security, Territory and Population: Lectures at the College De France 1977–78*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

GUK. 2013. Speech Delivered at the Independent Academies Association (IAA) National Conference. GOV.UK, July 8. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lord-nashspeaks-to-the-independent-academies-association-iaa-national-conference>

Jessop, B. & Sum, N-L. 2005. *Beyond the Regulation Approach: Putting the Capitalist Economy in its Place*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham

Kikert, W. 1991. Steering at a distance; a new paradigm of public governance in Dutch Higher Education. Paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research

Lubienski, C. 2014. Re-making the middle: Dis-intermediation in international context. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42 (3), 423-440

Nash, J. 2014. *Open Letter to Chairs*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/353107/Open_letter_to_Chairs_-_Lord_Nash.pdf

Mouffe, C. 1996. Democracy, Power and the "Political". In S. Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 245-256

Peck, J. 2010. *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. Oxford University Press: Oxford

Power, M. 1997. *The Audit Society. Rituals of Verification*. Oxford University Press: New York

Storify. 2013. "UKGovChat. Topic 2: Accountability; Who is Answerable to whom?" July 21. Retrieved from <http://165.225.132.45/UKGovChat/ukgovchat-sunday-21st-july-2013-accountability>

TES (Times Educational Supplement). 2014. *Governors govern unpaid in our spare time. By way of thanks, we are subject to intense cross-examination*. 12 February. Retrieved from <http://news.tes.co.uk/b/opinion/2014/02/12/governors-govern-unpaid-in-our-spare-time-by-way-of-thanks-we-are-subject-to-intense-cross-examination.aspx>