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Mapping school types in England

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

Keywords: *neoliberalism; school choice; school types; structural reform; mapping; typologies*

Introduction

Attempts to map English education provision are often at best incomplete (see e.g. DfE, 2012; Eurydice Unit, 2007; New Schools Network, 2015). Woods and Simkins (2014, p. 332) identify two reasons for this: 'any attempt to categorize the types of school groups that are emerging is fraught with difficulty and needs to be constantly revisited as new patterns of provision emerge'. This paper nevertheless seeks to address this gap by contributing to the field a quantification and conceptualisation of school types in England. This is an important task for two reasons. First, it has been a truism of Conservative, Labour and Coalition policy that school-type diversity, following market ideology, would improve the system. This has produced a 30-year period of diversification, internationally unparalleled, which

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

I make two contributions in this article; first, I bring a new methodology to bear in capturing and illuminating this busy and rapidly evolving landscape from a range of different perspectives. Through surveilling the terrain from multiple standpoints, I make visible features of the landscape otherwise hidden. This includes the residue of public provision and welfarism, and the emergence of privatised and corporatised provision. My second contribution is my contestation that, despite this

fragmentation, a consistent discourse is being reproduced concerning a shift from civic welfarism to domination by an 'uneasy coexistence' (Carvalho & Rodrigues, 2006, p. 340) of neoliberalism and neoconservativism and to pupils' construction as fixed, knowable markets.

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

On types and typologies

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

To produce a typology is to locate oneself in the field, privilege certain knowledge and ways of knowing, and make inevitably partial knowledge claims (Gunter & Ribbins, 2003). Following this, Bruce and Yearley (2006, p. 207) insist

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

Another reason for typologising loosely, building on Newman's (2007) sedimentary metaphor, is historical, discursive *faulting* and *folding*. As new political and ideological impetuses produce new forms of schooling, older forms often survive de-privileged and discursively marginalised, resulting in an education 'system' resembling rock strata. Fresh layers overlay without obliterating older ones, whose meaning is nevertheless altered under their discursive pressure. Were the process simply sedimentary, types created under former conditions might be semantically altered by this new layer, but, still buried, would be unremarked. I extend the geological metaphor to incorporate *faults and folds* to explain how these altered types live too in the present; thrust upwards to the surface in a dynamic process of ideological reinterpretation. For instance, academies as originally conceived under the New Labour government after 2000 were designed predominantly to replace poorly performing urban secondary comprehensives (Adonis, 2012). The academy 'type' therefore often invoked a failed, urban predecessor school and a new 'turn-around', or 'super' headteacher. In 2010, the Coalition government repositioned academies through prioritising the conversion of existing, high-attaining schools. Previous semantic collocations concerning the history, intake, location and prior attainment of schools categorised as academies were removed, and the label now relates primarily to freedom from statutory regulations which all academies share. Yet those original academies still exist; relegated to a sub-set of the type their characteristics once defined wholly. Once, it was possible to doubt academies' success; now, the semantic boundary change means they are almost successful by definition (Academies Commission, 2013); the original 'city' academies may benefit from this discursive association even as it marginalises their particular needs, histories and trajectories.

So, school types may be discrete or overlapping, and a single type may diverge semantically along different discourses, especially over time. What this means for

this paper is that any simple declaration of what any type *means* must be regarded as being necessarily susceptible to historical partiality (by not asking, for example, when this meaning has *not* applied) and reductionism (by not asking, for example, for whom and in which discourses this meaning never signified).

Mapping school types in England

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

Types by legal status

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

Table 1 shows that there are around 11 legal school types, although voluntary aided and controlled might easily count as distinct, and little distinguishes a City College from an academy, the two co-existing through *faulting and folding*. Some types, whilst having a legal status, are defined primarily instead in terms of the categories above. For instance, maintained grammar schools are understood primarily as community, foundation or voluntary schools. This is part of a phenomenon whereby selection and sorting—central to English schooling provision—are rendered invisible, or at least harder to see, in a strictly legal typology. This includes the right of admissions officers in certain faith schools to select according to religious criteria as well as the all-ability admissions of comprehensive schools. Legal status muffles these tendencies, concealing comprehensivism behind euphemistic terms such as community, or scattering faith schooling across several categories.

Table 1. School types by legal status

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

Types by curricular specialism

The creation or development of schools offering a distinctive curriculum and seeking to attract pupils showing an aptitude for such, reflects a long-standing tendency in English schooling and has undergone numerous reincarnations which may usefully be conceptualised together. This tendency is partly a response to perceived shortcomings in the products of English educational provision relative to the needs of the global economy, hence the weighting towards science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Nonetheless, also evident is a strong theme of curricular diversity for the sake of school differentiation alone, particularly in New Labour's development of specialist schools from 1997 to 2010. The extent to which the presence of a curricular specialism necessarily constructs a concomitant new school type varies: the appearance of UTCs and studio schools makes this once again a tight coupling. This is purposive and derives not just from these schools' distinctive curriculum, but also from their association with an overarching academy trust (the Studio Schools Trust, the Career Colleges trust and the Baker Dearing Educational Trust for UTCs—these two latter chaired by Lord Baker) franchising an espoused coherent vision, with 'a clear, nationally recognised brand with an identity of

excellence' (Career Colleges Trust, 2015, np). These trusts, while not sponsors, have succeeded where Oasis and E-Act have not, and achieved school-type status for their brand. Much of this is related to their curricular offer (see Table 2).

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

Table 2. School types by curricular specialism

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

or otherwise, is *branding*, the market (and the dismantling of the local authority) dictating that these brands apply to chains, and now *types*.

Types by pupil selection

Table 3 shows how selection against several dimensions of difference persists, England's 'half-hearted comprehensive education experiment' (Ball, 2008, p. 186) notwithstanding. The form most influencing state provision in England, albeit indirectly, is *selection by ability to pay*. In England, around 7% of children are taught in independent, fee-paying schools. The high correlation between wealth and educational outcomes means that those 7% in 2013 took 39.4% of Cambridge and 42.8% of Oxford places (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). This influences profoundly state-funded provision, where covert or overt selection and processes of self-segregation are normalised, even in comprehensive schools (see Coldron, Cripps & Shipton, 2010). Other selection methods are so long-standing (e.g. by age) as to appear axiomatic and are virtually invisible as a selection device. Nonetheless, this is perhaps the most persistent way of categorising schools in England, with origins in the industrial revolution.

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

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

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

Types of academy

So far, I have presented three different perspectives of the same landscape, though none captures it entirely. In the next two sections, I move on to explore in more

Table 3. School types by pupil selection

Selection method	School type
By age	Nursery (age 2 or 3–5).
	Infant (5–7).
	First (4–8).
	Junior (7–11).
	Primary (5–11).
	Middle (8–12).
	Secondary (11 or 12–16 or 18).
	All-through (3, 4 or 5–16 or 18).
By sex	Male.
	Female.
	Co-educational (mixed).
By faith	Academies with a religious character (may select up to 50%).
	Trust schools, where religious, may reserve up to 100% places for children of the faith if over-subscribed. If under-subscribed, they must admit anyone applying.
	Voluntary schools (as trust schools).
By ability	Maintained grammars (legally, these are either community; VA; VC or foundation schools).
	Secondary moderns (never called such, they nonetheless exist wherever there is a nearby grammar school).
	Comprehensive schools (admitting pupils of all abilities constitutes a selection policy).
	Special schools: for pupils with learning and physical disabilities and impairments. Sub-types include foundation and community.
By aptitude	Any school with a curricular specialism may select pupils with an aptitude for that area [1] for up to 10% of its places.
	UTCs.
	Studio schools.
	City Colleges, especially the remaining City College for the Technology of the Arts: the Brit School.
	Career colleges.
	Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Many, though not all pupils placed here after demonstrating what is constructed as insufficient aptitude for mainstream schooling.
	AP academy. As above.
	By aptitude for boarding: state boarding schools. Interviews permitted, uniquely.
By ability to pay	State boarding schools.

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

detail newer forms of provision. First, I typologise the varieties arising from academies, whose legal framework has provided the template for a Cambrian explosion of new school types. These have tended to exploit their statutory freedoms in recognisably clustered ways owing to a neoconservative valorisation of certain forms of

knowledge, e.g. STEM, often under the aegis of a unifying brand identity and making typologising a necessary task. However, it brings a particular set of challenges. The most important is that unlike elsewhere in this paper, as a unitary legal entity (except see Alternative Provision (AP) academies) the most important distinctions between academies are concealed from the market and are instead products of any single academy's history and circumstances, and unlikely to influence its brand status. Nonetheless, these differences are sufficiently organisationally and culturally significant to constitute sub-types, rather than simply 'flavours' (Wolfe, 2013, p. 102). For example, the Academies Commission (2013) distinguished between what it termed Mark I, Mark II and Mark III sponsored academies. The former, created between 2002 and c.2006, sought sponsors from the private sector, who contributed up to £2 million of the school's capital costs. Mark II academies were permitted to seek sponsors from establishments such as universities, who would not be liable for capital costs, but whose funding agreements were controlled more tightly.

In Mark III sponsored academies, from 2010, some of these controls are removed. For the purposes of this paper, the question is, to what extent do these differences constitute a discrete academy type? Certainly, the differing conditions made an organisational and perhaps cultural difference there, a point made by Wolfe when discussing the de-systematisation of schooling provision more generally; 'each school [has] a legal/governance structure which reflects the circumstances and political climate of the moment of its creation' (Wolfe, 2013, p. 100). To mitigate this particularising trend, therefore, Table 4 represents the features of academies' funding agreements only in sub-type categorisations. Instead, in privileging branding, it highlights those characteristics more easily available to the market.

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

Types of multi-school

One of the more complex areas of school-type diversification is that represented by groupings, whereby single legal entities operate over multiple sites and/or educational providers or other collaborations unite in new and varied ways, although retaining their distinct legal identities. This phenomenon has arisen for several reasons, including school failure; headteacher recruitment problems; headteachers' need to distinguish their school's offer/brand locally, or sustain its existence; the propensity of school-led improvement systems, currently privileged in policy, to produce federations or chains (Chapman, 2015); the resonance of this way of working with a collective professional memory of inter-school collaboration; and the

Table 4. Types of academy

School type	Sub-type(s)[1]
Sponsored academy	School-led: includes federations and multi-academy trusts (MATs) (hence chains), but may be one other academy. Sub-types include enforced conversions of lower-attaining schools. FE/HEI/public-sector-led. Sub-types include enforced conversions. Business-led (constituted as charitable foundations). Sub-types Marks I, II and III (Academies Commission, 2013), chains and enforced conversions. Faith. Sub-types include chains established by faith institutions, e.g. CoE, RC, etc. and non-affiliated chains with a religious character, e.g. United Learning Trust academies. (UTCs, Alternative Provision (AP) academies and studio schools categorisable here but also constitute own type).
Stand-alone academy	Almost all are high-attaining schools which 'converted' to academy status after 2010. ('Conversion' here is legally meaningless: the former school closes and a new academy opens, as with the original city academies.) Sub-types include by age, faith, sex and ability.
Free school	Established by existing (M)AT (sub-types include business/faith-led). Converted from independent sector. Or established as a state-sector extension of extant independent trust. Established by local community/parent group. (UTCs, studio schools and *new* AP academies categorisable here but also constitute own types).
Alternative-Provision (AP) academy	Converted from Pupil Referral Unit status. Set up as free school.
UTC	None.
Studio school	None.

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

multiple consequences of the dominant market logic which normalises take-overs and mergers. Such agglomerations can no longer satisfactorily be conceptualised merely as more-or-less formal collaborations, for as noted above, multiplicity may be a legal illusion, as with multi-academy trusts (MATs). Nor will legal status suffice to differentiate, since this fragments rather than orders the landscape; e.g. it is 'possible for existing federations to apply to become academies either as separate institutions or as academy federations' (Chapman, 2015, p. 50). To demarcate this as a new category, I am calling such groupings multi-schools.

Table 5 necessarily describes this phenomenon in 'loose' terms: whilst most of the types draw on a legal interpretation, not all do so, and may be categorised in different ways. A primary purpose of these arrangements is to replace local authorities as providers of collective support for schools with private-sector models and/or providers. This is part of the political Right's continuing attempt to undermine the post-war welfare settlements, in what Clarke and Newman (1997, p. 8) describe as a shift from a welfare state underpinned by 'bureau-professionalism' to a managerial state privileging choice, markets and self-dependency. In doing so,

Table 5. Types of multi-school

Multi-school type	**Sub-type(s)**	
Multi-academy trusts	School-led.	
	Co-operative.	
	Third party-led.	Private-sector organisations operating as charities.
		Religious institutions.
Umbrella academy trusts	Majority governance.	
	Minority governance.	
Federations[1]	Cross-phase.	
	Stronger-weaker school arrangement.	
	Size federations (small to medium-sized schools federating).	
	Mainstreaming federations (special school(s) with 1+ mainstream).	
	Faith federations.	
Foundation trusts	School-led.	
	Co-operative.	
	Trust partners from beyond the school(s).	
Teaching school alliances	None.	

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

accountability is redefined 'to establish a discursive consensus which constructs teachers and schools as being in need of external regulation' (Poulson, 2006, p. 585); the organisational hierarchies this facilitates are seen increasingly in newer manifestations of multi-school arrangement, where CEOs lead and manage educational provision across multiple sites with only some, contextually variable power delegated to local 'leaders' and governing bodies (Wolfe, 2013). Whilst teaching-school alliances ostensibly offer a more collaborative structure and ethos, in fact leaders of such alliances are constituted as manager-consultants (Courtney, 2015) and may construct 'empires' in a similar way to the CEOs of MATs (Courtney, forthcoming).

Conceptualising types through locus of legitimacy and branding

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

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

gets a say in education provision and *whose interests are being served*. Such questions include:

- Who appoints the majority of the governing body? (And may therefore recruit or dismiss the headteacher?)
- Who owns the school's assets (building and land)?
- Who owns the *brand*?
- How strong are forms of accountability (see Ranson, 2003) to stakeholders other than pupils, parents and communities?
- Who are these stakeholders?
- How is this represented in the school's structures and/or legal status?
- How are these stakeholders accorded authority?
- To whom are they accountable?
- What are their values?

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

First, corporate legitimacy arises from successive administrations' neoliberal policies such that 'philanthropy and business are essential parts of the delivery and policy processes of education' (Ball, 2013, p. 10). Brands may now constitute types, and are owned by quasi-private-sector trusts. Capital—through academy sponsorship—may thereby secure majority positions for its bearers as education leaders on governing bodies (Courtney, 2015). Multiple academy trusts need not delegate significant power to local governing bodies and headteachers. Through hostile take-overs, corporate legitimacy may assert itself over the wishes of communities, as at Downhills Primary School.[1] Corporate legitimacy is underwritten, sanctioned and operationalised by the state: the DfE sends 'academy brokers' to 'underperforming' schools to arrange their acquisition by preferred trust partners.

Legitimation may also derive from affiliation to a religious institution. Glimpses of this locus are evident throughout the typologies, but none fully represents the way in which faith schools have become newly meaningful through *faulting and folding* in the present policy landscape. Faith schools institutionalise success according to this neoliberal/conservative logic in several ways. First, they constitute a strong brand; second, and related, attainment there is perceived to be higher (though attributable partly to socio-economically unrepresentative pupil intakes (Mortimore, 2013); third, selection as an organising principle of education provision is increasingly acceptable; fourth, religious institutions have taken advantage of the promotion of alternative providers to position themselves as an exemplar for that role. As

well as their historical qualifications in this regard, their ready-networked status aligns with the contemporary, neoliberal turn to network governance (Hatcher, 2014). Fifth, they often have the funds to make good on commitments to establish schools; and sixth, religious education often resonates with the neoconservative privileging of a 'traditional' moral education (although these sets of interests being fluid, struggles persist over who gets to define what counts as moral (see e.g. Tran, 2014)).

Of course, there are important distinctions between types of faith school in relation to the questions posed above: unlike in voluntary-controlled schools, the religious trust appoints a majority of the members of the governing body in voluntary-aided schools, and unlike in either of those two, faith academies may select only 50% according to pupils' faith, rather than 100%, even if oversubscribed. Nevertheless, these differences do not invalidate a category which reflects the importance of religious institutions in this neoliberalised policy landscape. Exemplifying this is Higham's (2014) study of accepted free-school proposals; 15% were from faith groups, comprising the second-greatest single source following existing state schools. He suggests that their motivation 'often related most clearly to serving their own particular faith community' (p. 410); this is facilitated through these schools' arranging their own pupil admissions. Further, faith schools' legal right to exercise 'regard ... in connection with the termination of the employment of any teacher at the school, to any conduct on his part which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the religion' (*School Standards and Framework Act*, 1998; 60.5.b) justifies Catholic-school guidance that divorced or gay governors or senior leaders of Catholic schools may be dismissed. This constitutes a *de jure* exemption from the legal principle of equality in employment and recruitment. This matters because legal exemptions and academy autonomies permit the expression and furthering of powerful religious interests on governing bodies, and/or in school culture.

The third locus of legitimation is public. Notions of 'public' are liable both to over-simplification through being deployed as an incantatory shibboleth to position users in relation to neoliberal discourse, and liable also to near analytical uselessness through justifiable problematisation (see Newman, 2007). Here, 'public' must recognise both that strong consumer accountability operates in *all* schools (Ranson, 2003) and that maintained governing bodies, following compulsory re-constitution, may contain just one LA member (DfE, 2014b). Nonetheless, maintained schools' LA connections bear meaning in relation to 'publicness' because they are multiple —the LA providing typically more services than simply governorship; because these connections may speak to a school's identity, values and culture; and because they are legitimated through structures which at least invoke democracy. It is both ascertainable and significant whether the school buildings and land belong to the public through the LA, or to a trust, particularly corporate, whose ownership of these assets signifies their privatisation and accords trustees the right to determine what happens there. It matters that LA-centred pupil-admissions arrangements at least attempt to consider the effect of those arrangements on all a community's schools

and on the child, rather than that child's contribution to an academy's position in the market (Academies Commission, 2013). There is a second discourse of public legitimation, however, pertaining to stand-alone academies. This holds that legitimacy is conferred by the school's location within a community whose members may serve as parent or staff governors, or who have transferred to co-opted status from former community-governor roles. Whilst there are no such roles for LA representatives, meaningful relations are expressed through contractual arrangements for services such as finance or human resources or simply as the vestiges of the former relationship. Accountability to the community is strong, and is calculated through consumer satisfaction and performance measures. Within these parameters, the school may fulfil its obligations to *its* public as it wishes.

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

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

Coldron, Crawford, Jones & Simkins (2014), I suggest that distinctions deployed as brands are intended to enhance that school's position in the field relative to other schools, product and producer of the hierarchisation of school types. Those Headteachers or Principals with sufficient capital are able to manoeuvre their schools into those advantaged positions. This, then, is branding as symbolic violence.

Conclusion

This mapping reveals that despite the multiple ways to conceptualise school-type diversification, if one includes variations according to pupil sex and age which have largely been omitted from these typologies for simplicity, there are presently between 70 and 90 different types of school in England. This is not to say that parents may choose from this number: a significant proportion *selects the pupil*, albeit covertly and/or through branding. There is no sign that this 30-year drive for school-type diversification will cease whichever administration governs because of the long-standing cross-party consensus regarding the appropriateness of neoliberal solutions to the 'problem' of raising educational standards.

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

the state is becoming more, not less powerful. Importantly, both neoliberalism and neoconservatism differentiate and hierarchise pupils, the former through markets and the latter through maintaining a cultural arbitrary (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) by means of a mandated curriculum which excludes some pupils' interests. Inevitably then, education provision will increasingly reproduce societal segregation.

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

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Note

1. Downhills Primary School in North London was the site of a high-profile, unsuccessful struggle by the school's leaders, governors and community to resist forced academisation by the Department for Education following an unsatisfactory 2012 inspection outcome, ordered by the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.

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