THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Re-Inventing Public Education

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Re-inventing public education: the new role of knowledge in education policy-making[i]

Abstract

This article focuses on the changing role of knowledge in education policy making within the knowledge society. Through an examination of key policy texts, the Scottish case of the Integrated Children Services is used as an example of this new trend. We discuss the ways in which knowledge is being used in order to re-configure education as part of a range of public services to meet individuals' needs. This, we argue, has led to a 'scientization' of education governance where it is only knowledge, closely intertwined with action (or otherwise 'measures'), that can reveal problems and shape solutions. The article concludes highlighting the key role of knowledge policy and governance in orienting education policy making through a re-invention of the public role of education.

Key words: knowledge, education policy, integration, data, indicators, public

Introduction

This paper examines the new role of knowledge in education policy-making within the knowledge society. It focuses on its shifting uses in contemporary public policy and, in particular, in governing education. The paper uses the case of Scotland as an example, and more specifically the country's emphasis on the promotion of the integration of 'children's services'. It shows how education is being reconfigured as part of a wide spectrum of the 'delivery' of public 'services' to meet specific individual 'needs'. Knowledge plays a key role in promoting this new agenda, as it is only through the integration of knowledge that integration of policy is made feasible.

Knowledge and education policy have always had a loose governing relation in Scotland; policy governed knowledge production to some degree and knowledge (a specific type of knowledge –in the political arithmetic tradition [for a detailed discussion see Ozga et al, 2008]) governed the direction of education policy. With the explosion of knowledge production in recent years this relationship has become far more intense; in a sense, what we seem to experience is a 'scientization' of education governance, where it is increasingly assumed that it is only knowledge (and in particular, statistical knowledge) that can reveal problems and shape solutions. To take this slightly further, problems do not seem to exist or matter to policy makers unless they appear in alarming red colours in statistical spreadsheets or media headlines. Knowledge in education governance increasingly does not simply unlock problems that lie 'out there'; it represents the new 'coming into being' (Stehr and Meja, 2005; 10) of problems and education realities. This trend relates to the pre-dominance of evidence-based policy, or more simply the 'what works' approach to education policy-making (Davies et. al., 2000; Davies, 2004; Nutley et. al., 2002; Schuller and Burns, 2007). Accountability is at the heart of this shift; the governing of a public comprised by well-managed, responsible and accountable individuals.

Therefore, this presentation aims to track this shifting relationship between policy and knowledge. First, it will show how Scotland has increasingly been moving from bureaucratic/professional knowledge about education, a part of the public sector, to individualised, personalised and integrated knowledge about a society. It examines the extent to which these new knowledge *politics* (Stehr, 2004) then re-enter the public sphere as the new moralizing, market-based reconfiguration of what education as a public good is or might look like in the 21st century; and finally, that we might best understand the relation between knowledge and education policy if we moved the lens to an examination of *knowledge policy* itself. In other words, the proliferation of knowledge in education governance has resulted in a weakening of education as a distinctive field of governance in itself; rather, it is the regulation of knowledge that appears to determine the governance of 'human services', education included. Integrated children's services -the focus of this paper- are one example of this new shift.

Knowledge in the knowledge society

The idea of the changing role of knowledge within the knowledge society originates in the publication of two texts, *The Production of Knowledge* (Gibbons et al 1994) and *Re-thinking Science* (Nowotny et al, 2001). Both texts elaborate on the idea of the altering nature of knowledge and in particular in the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge. Mode 1 Knowledge is characterised as traditional and discipline-based, while the emergent Mode 2 Knowledge is derived from hybridised research that combines the academy, the state and the private sector (Gibbons et. al. 1994). Mode 2 Knowledge encompasses a shift from a linear process of knowledge production and dissemination to an interactive, iterative, problem-focused and trans-disciplinary model (Delanty, 2001; Gibbons et. al, 1994; Nowotny et al, 2001). As we will see further, the Integrated Children's Services policy fits well with Mode 2[1].

Further, knowledge about the education system does not comprise only of information and data; it is the end-product in the process of data collection, inextricably linked with action –or 'measures'. In the UK in particular, there is strong movement towards knowledge-informed policy making in education (Lauder et al, 2004, Thomas and Pring, 2004). In both England and Scotland we observe increased consciousness of performance levels and position in relation to other schools and authorities, and more active use of data to monitor performance and to identify trends. National government agencies and departments, local education authorities and teachers have developed in recent years increased in-house capacity for the management of data and its translation into knowledge and practice (Furlong, 2004, Ozga, forthcoming 2009; Ozga, 2008). According to Ozga,

> The process has been in train since the 1980s, though not always in a consistent form. However one constant feature is the rapid growth of information produced by the new agencies and actors involved in public service provision, and the related growth of demand for more information, and for more to be done with the information available. This, in turn, creates new central demands for data about operations and resources. Data production and management were and are

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[1] This paragraph draws on Ozga, J., Grek, S. and Lawn, M. (2008 –under review), 'The New Production of Governing Knowledge: Education Research in the UK', *Soziale Welt*.

essential to the new governance turn; constant comparison is its symbolic feature, as well as a distinctive mode of operation (forthcoming; no page numbers)

Similarly, at the international level, the ranking and rating of educational achievement by international organisations like the OECD or the European Commission has become one of the prime tools for education systems to evaluate their competitive status against that of other countries in the global economy (Grek, forthcoming).

Such a radical change in the relationship between knowledge and policy is bound to have direct effects on how policy is currently being 'done' –this is the shift from bureaucratic to post-bureaucratic governance, which again, like Mode 2 Knowledge, appears as far more diffuse and seemingly democratic, in comparison with the old bureaucracies. If bureaucracy was based on local, elite, simplified, static and centrally controlled knowledge stored in large files, post-bureaucracy is what bureaucracy was not: it appears to be –the argument goes – decentralised, future-oriented, networked, processual, autonomous and fluid (Isaakyan et. al., 2008). Its networked nature (in the sense that it is co-produced by different networks of policy makers, experts and practitioners) promotes its easy exchange and hence operates as one of the prime engines for its marketization within neo-liberal economies (Thrift, 2005).

Further, the rise of knowledge-based professions and the brokering of knowledge by knowledge managers are both central in making post-bureaucracy 'happen'. However, as will be discussed later, this brokering is not simply a clerical, administrative act. Rather, it comes with heavy moral and ethical considerations, first, on how one can use knowledge to create a better, 'flourishing' society and second, how one can do that without breaching the rights of privacy and data protection. This is the uncertainty that Mode 2 knowledge and post-bureaucracy present: though –arguably- socially constructed and contested, it is at the same time *risky* knowledge. This is why the language about a flourishing society, or from a negative perspective, an unequal and unjust society, is, as Stehr has succinctly described, a language about agency, malleability, flexibility, multi-purpose resources, volatility and heterogeneity (2004). Individuals and groups (and as will be shown children, too) are seen as having the capacity to employ and transform their life structures on the basis of this new social contract. The governance of education *per se* is of little interest here. Instead, we are experiencing strategic efforts 'to move new scientific and technical knowledge, and thereby the future, into the centre of the cultural, economic and political matrix of society' (Stehr, 2004; ix). Mode 2 Knowledge, although initially seen as more democratic and socially constructed, now has to more than ever be closely regulated and controlled. What appears on the surface as easily flowing, comparable and integrated knowledge, requires at its kernel heavy regulation and policing.

The following section examines the rise and expansion of the integration of different sectors working with children in Scotland. It is based on a literature review of 12 key official texts in the period 1998-2007; the texts are considered influential because they represent official governmental policy; they are texts covering consultation processes with a wide variety of actors (different professionals, knowledge managers, parents, pupils); they have been the focus of debate amongst professional groups and especially the Inspectorate; and they are closely interlinked through cross-referencing. Their sources are the Scottish Executive (the name of the Scottish Government from 1999 to 2007) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) –a key expert

group of inspectors who have substantially contributed to the change. Seven of these texts are examined here. Before we move to their analysis however, some contextual, historical factors specific to Scotland have to be taken into account. The next section deals with this issue.

The particularities of the Scottish case

Scotland is a relatively small nation within the United Kingdom: it has a population of just 5 million people compared with 50 million in its neighbour England. Although Scotland has been part of the UK for the last 300 years, and is subject to strong policy influences from UK political parties, the Scottish education system has been allowed to develop separately, and provides an important part of the Scottish national identity. Since 1999, there has been a new Scottish parliament, providing scope for further divergence of education policy as a result of different priorities and ideologies north and south of the border (Arnott, 2007, Raffe, 2005).

Scotland has a fairly homogenous school system in which 96% of Scottish children are educated in non-selective state schools (including many established to cater for those who choose a Roman Catholic education) all of which are administered by local education authorities. Primary schooling starts at age 5, and pupils transfer to secondary schools at age 12. Although compulsory education ends at age 16, the vast majority of pupils now remain at school to age 18. All schools provide a general education, and there is very little vocational education provision until the post-16 stages. There is a Scottish system of National Qualifications providing a unified system of qualifications for all students from age 15/16 onwards.

Since the beginning of the 20th century partnership and centralisation were the two competing forces in the Scottish education system, with some claiming that its defining feature (always in juxtaposition to the English system) is the role of the local authorities as 'an element of a common purpose' (McPherson and Raab, 1988; 3), or for others, that the centre had in fact always been the core engine of education policy making:

> Scotland is a small country in which everybody values education, knows everybody else, and can easily be got together to thrash things out. Thus, it is claimed, the education system is one in which people naturally 'look to the centre' for a lead (McPherson and Raab 1988; 30).

A further distinguishing feature of Scottish education has been its emphasis on a national, public system and the decreased inclination (again in comparison to England) to support private institutions. According to McPherson and Raab (1988), the universities in Scotland were always publicly controlled and the principle of public, universal elementary education has been in existence since the 1870s. However, it is also interesting for the Scottish case to note that two views were traditionally in competition in the country in the first half of the 20th century and until 1965, when comprehensive schooling was introduced for the first time. These two ideas, although now seemingly belonging to the past, still appear to influence notions of what public education is or should be about:
a. first, the idea that education should be made available in ways that reduced social distinction and that increased access; and

b. second, the idea promoted mainly by the 'secondary education party' that there should be an elite secondary school preparing the higher achievers for university selection, including the infamous 'lad o'pairts' (the poor but clever Scot), and another type of secondary school, the post-elementary education for those less ambitions and lower achieving pupils (McPherson and Raab, 1988).

This second model is particularly interesting in this analysis. It has been described as a 'social efficiency' model or a 'sponsored mobility' system and it represents the defining myth of the Scottish education system: the principle of meritocracy, or in other words, locating and 'harvesting talent' no matter social class or family background.

However, according to McPherson and Raab (1988), the principle of social efficiency favoured wealthier families and localities and although overtly was presented as universalistic, it was covertly particularistic and based on pupil differentiation and selection. However, their most relevant argument for this analysis is the following:

> [This was] a stratified system of schooling mapped onto communities that were believed by the state to have different potentials for secondary education…Schools and community interacted thereafter to reproduce and probably to reinforce local variations in community and social class orientations towards the value of schooling…[therefore] two separate ladders were created from primary school: a narrow one leading to higher education and a broader one terminating on entry to the labour market (1988; 44).

Individualism, then, is at the heart of the Scottish faith in meritocracy (Paterson, 2003) and, despite the Scottish attachment to the 'democratic intellect' (Davie, 1961) and the enduring power of the loyalty for education as a public good, 'the educational provision then expresses a combination of individualistic and collective principles' (Ozga ,2005). This is significant in order to understand education policy making in Scotland after devolution in 1999. Since 2007, in particular, when the new nationalist government in Scotland launched its new 'modernised nationalism' project, rationalising public policy has become part of creating the new imaginary of Scotland (Arnott and Ozga, 2008). Integrated Children Services, although a small part, are still part of this re-invention of the public role of Scottish education.

The Integrated Children Services (ICS) in Scotland

The integration of services, such as education, health, social work and the police, for – initially the more vulnerable ones and increasingly all— children, began in Scotland in 1998, one year before the establishment of the devolved administration in the country. The first initiative echoes strongly New Labour language, which was the freshly then established Westminster government in England. 'New Community Schools' (NCS) became the new strategy of the Scottish Office 'to promote social inclusion and raise education standards' (Scottish Office, 1998). The text analysed here, 'New Community Schools – Prospectus', launches the government initiative to develop NCS throughout Scotland. It gives an outline of how local authorities were advised to apply for this pilot programme.

NCS, as with similar initiatives in England, was at the heart of the New Labour project for education, summed up as the double aim to raise inclusion and attainment by establishing new standards and objectives. NCS are described as 'a radical attack on this vicious cycle of underachievement'. Human capital language is used; children will now be able to 'raise their full potential', will be 'well-motivated' and have 'high esteem':

> New Community Schools will embody the fundamental principle that the potential of all children can be realised only by addressing their needs in the round –and that this requires an integrated approach by all involved (Scottish Office, 1998)

There is a double emphasis here working almost as a reversal of the established teacher role. Instead of the traditional image of the lone, central figure of the teacher working with a class of pupils, in this new context, teachers need to work collaboratively with a number of other professionals to meet the needs of individual pupils through the application of personal learning plans: 'It will require teachers, social workers, family workers and health personnel to work *together* to develop common objectives and goals centred on the needs of *individual* children at school and on families' (Scottish Office, 1998, my emphasis). Targeted, specific action is required at the micro-scale of the pupil and their families, who now appear with enhanced agency and the potential to speak up and actively seek for solutions. Parental involvement and responsibility is central, as central is the effective knowledge management for the integrated delivery of these services. 'A single reporting and accountability framework' is what integrated management requires, together with 'multi-disciplinary training and staff development'. Despite the focus on selected individuals (professionals, pupils and their parents), the argument is that schools will now become even more valued than before, as they will be seen to offer more: 'The school itself will be seen to play a wider role in the community and be valued even more highly by all members of that community'. Education here is described as a public good, however only if organised in an integrated fashion; that is, when offered as part of a broader service for developing the 'whole child'. In other words, it is not of intrinsic value but has to 'relate' to other services and to pupils' lives. Above all, outcomes and targets appear as absolutely essential for a successful bid of a local authority to establish NCS:

> Proposals should specify and measure *outcomes* which should be linked specifically to elements of the bid. Proposals should set *targets* in all aspects. These targets should be higher than would be expected without New Community School status. Proposals should set out the *baseline measures* on which such targets are based.

In the same spirit, 'Making a difference: Effective Implementation of Cross-Cutting policy' (Hogg, 2000) was conducted by the Scottish Executive Policy Review Unit with the aim to address the problem of a very high number of 'cross-cutting' policies. It refers to an 'initiative overload', a 'proliferation of partnerships' and a number of 'mixed messages' that the public sector receives. The Review emphasised that 'single agency' issues remain, but also that cross-cutting solutions are 'increasingly being used to tackle key social and economic issues'.

So, what is there to be done? The review's main suggestion is to *renew* the policy development process through involving agencies at the policy development from an early stage and routinely engaging them in a sustainable relationship. The Review suggests that, although the Executive has to be less prescriptive about processes,

effective cross-cutting policy can be achieved through deep accountability structures, both at the financial level, though pooling budgets, and, crucially, at the level of partnerships, through the establishment of joint inspection regimes (Hogg 2000).

Further, the policy text 'For Scotland's Children –Better Integrated Children's Services' (Scottish Executive, 2001), published a year later, became a landmark and the bible for the integration of education with other services in Scotland. The text, after outlining extensive facts and figures of deprivation and exclusion in the country (with the case of Glasgow particularly highlighted), re-conceptualises the 'good' school as not the one which offers education only, but that which provides more of an 'all-round' service. The document emphasises that NCS have began to win 'hearts and minds', even of those staff who 'take a narrower view' (Scottish Executive, 2001; 14). Not surprisingly, the key question to how this new vision is achieved is a question of *knowledge* and hence *action*: 'But how do WE know and what do we DO about it? (Scottish Executive, 2001; 15 –emphasis in the original). The answer exemplifies the ways 'old' professional knowledge is being sidelined in favour of a new kind of knowledge that has accountability at its heart:

> We should perhaps expect one of the two guides: health or education (the universal services) to identify such children and co-ordinate the further help they need. This does not always happen! Instead, the child waits – sometimes escalating the problematic behaviour if that is their manifestation of "something wrong" – until there is some attention. If it gets picked up at school there is a range of options: guidance, educational psychologist, social work, Reporter. If in the community, another range, perhaps involving the police. If in the family, yet another, perhaps including the GP and specialist medical services such as child and adolescent psychiatry. The point is that the service the child ends up in is largely due to the accident of the point of entry to specialist services, rather than to any *comprehensive appraisal of the optimum response to the assessed needs* of the child (Scottish Executive 2001; 15 –my emphasis).

A significant element of this new 'way of knowing' is not just creating new facts and understandings of how one governs education –the most significant aspect of this is that knowledge *and* action are intertwined in a very tight, almost indistinctive, relation. This, however, does not only suggest action on behalf of the state – individuals are agents in their own right. Even more so, they have to know and act:

> In the best of recent research and in the good professional practice identified in this report there is a developing view of the child as an *active agent* in their world and a commitment to *empowerment* as a key in any change or recovery process. A view is emerging across policy and practice that *every child is an individual*, that their best interests demand that we view their lives holistically and that in doing so we articulate and accord them a set of intrinsic human rights as well as rights as service users. (Scottish Executive, 2001; xxx –my emphasis).

This is not simply an organisational change that stems from the capacity of the system to produce new 'ways of knowing' itself. It is a change in principles and values: a re-invented morality for public education. According to the text, 'some authorities have re-examined their structures from an *ideological* and service improvement perspective (rather than simply for reasons of financial expediency)' (Scottish Executive, 2001; 18). However the financial gain looks also substantial. According to the text, 'a head teacher's unwillingness to invest £40 per week in classroom assistance leads the social work department in the same council to spend £400 per

week on an excluded child' (ibid). Therefore, the stakes are high –and they appear at all levels, financial and ideological.

The 'Personal Learning Plans' (PLPs), first established with the New Community Schools, are a substantial part of this shift of the emphasis to the individual child: 'The objective of PLPs is to encourage self-evaluation by pupils *of their own needs* and participation in negotiating personal learning targets to empower the learner and help encourage independent learning habits' (Scottish Executive, 2001; 15 –my emphasis).

The document moves on to examine the planning framework for delivering the new service: this is to be achieved through a rationalisation of the planning requirements in order to consider children's services as a *single* service system. Through a series of Action Points, the policy document describes how a Joint Children Services Plan might look like, the establishment of universal services through Single Entry Points and the coordination of 'needs assessment' and intervention. The focus is on audit and the 'improved utilisation of existing data'.

2004 appears to be a year of change for the integrated children services provision in Scotland: there is a discursive shift that moves the lens from social justice claims to protect vulnerable children to the creation of a *single* service for *all* children, irrespective of background or class. Further, the realisation appears that the management of data across services might be more important than it initially looked. One of the most significant motors of this re-orientation was the work of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). 'The Sum of its parts? The development of integrated community schools in Scotland' (2004) is the HMIe evaluation report of the development of the NCS in Scotland.

More specifically, in 2002 the Minister for Education and Young People asked from HMIe to lead a multi-disciplinary team that included the Social Work Services Inspectorate (SWSI) and the Health Improvement Strategy Division (SEHD) to evaluate the progress of eight cluster projects in different local authority areas in Scotland. The team gave a positive review of the clusters slowly adopting integrated approaches towards the development of a common service. However, this progress was seemingly not good enough. The eight projects appeared to interpret the framework according to their local needs and in very diverse manners; very often there was no ownership of the project, which seemed to be the sole responsibility of the integration manager; 'most reports of either pilot initiatives or individual projects contained evidence of impact derived mainly from user responses and participant uptake' (HMIE, 2004). According to the Review, 'overall there was a need for more rigorous evaluation of the impact of initiatives at both strategic and operational levels' (HMIE, 2004). The difficulty to establish such evaluation processes was mainly due to the 'lack of systematic baseline information against which progress might be measured'. According to the Review, 'consideration should be given to improving the national availability of, and access to, clear baseline data on health and social needs'.

In 'Making Services Better for Scotland's Children' (HMIE, 2004b), a Joint Inspection Framework was launched by HMIE together with the HMI of Constabulary (police), the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care, the Social

Work Services Inspectorate and the NHS Quality Improvement Scotland. Again, like before, knowledge is central to the new proposals by the Inspectorate, which aims to 'move towards establishing an integrated system of inspection by 2008'. Together with on-going self-evaluation, inspection now 'needs to take account of *what is known*': this is the new 'intelligence-led', 'proportionate' approach to inspection for 'targeted' activity, based on the following principles: first, that the needs and rights of children are at the core of the inspection; second, the primary focus is on outcomes; and third, that the focus is on the promotion of children's safety, well-being and development. What underlies all these principles of course is the prerequisite of what was indicated above: 'what is known', or what our knowledge is about needs and the outcomes we have to pursue. This is the emergence of a new field of public governance that brings the state and its citizens (or 'users') in a direct exchange of goods and services. What is also significant is that this knowledge production is not a planned activity due to take place in the short- or long-term. Instead, like with all other indicator and benchmarking exercises, it is initiated using the data *available*. It is not about finding problems lying 'out there'; rather, it aims at managing the knowledge available in order to be directed towards casting light on specific, chosen issues. Of course, the construction of specific indicators and benchmarks represents more of a political exercise rather than evidence-based practice (Grek, 2008). Knowledge and, more precisely, knowledge politics precedes the problem, its governance, and the solution.

Finally, there's no use in creating new knowledge unless it can be shared:

> Joint working across services and between services and inspectorates requires clear and common understandings about standards and quality. A coherent suite of quality and performance indicators used across all services for self-evaluation and accessible to all inspectorates would be helpful in achieving a common language across services for children.

Indeed, creating a common language is a prerequisite for the effective collaboration and communication of such a wide range of professionals. This common language is created through the introduction of quality and performance indicators; these will enhance the possibilities for more consistent and 'robust' self-evaluation, which will then be also externally assessed through inspection: 'On-going self-evaluation is the key to service improvement and is complemented by external evaluation in the improvement cycle'. The key objective here is to use knowledge in order to do away with sector-specific indicators and move the professional focus on generic quality indicators. This will guarantee smoother data exchange and share as well as joint inspection regimes. Therefore, one could describe the new indicator nexus like this:
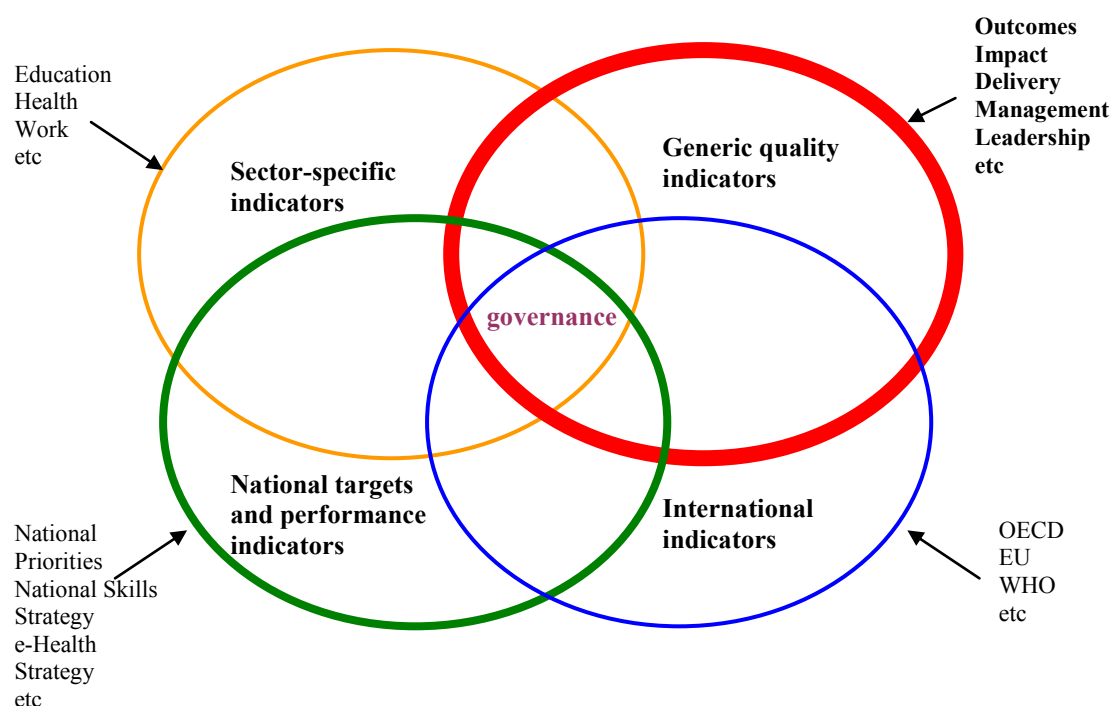
Fig 1: The indicator nexus

This table shows the interconnectedness of the different indicator groupings in integrated children services. Sector-specific indicators have to be streamlined to include and incorporate national targets and performance indicators, international comparisons and indicators and, most important, generic quality indicators. These latter ones are key here: they create this common language of communication across the sectors where the emphasis is on knowledge management, delivery, outcomes and impact.

Finally, the Scottish Executive's 'Getting it Right for Every Child –Proposals for Action' (2005) (GirFEC) again signals the need to have a 'unified approach' where 'children and parents should know what to expect from public agencies and what is expected of them' (Scottish Executive 2005). It introduces for the first time the Integrated Assessment Planning and Recording Framework (IAF) which would apply to *all* children and will require compliance with the Social Care Data Standards Project. IAF

• requires every worker and every agency to be accountable and acknowledge their responsibilities for the development and wellbeing of children and young people;
• applies to everyone working with children and young people, whether they are part of a universal service such as education, primary health care or the police, or whether they are in a more specialist, targeted service, such as social work, school care accommodation service or secure accommodation services, acute/tertiary health services or the psychological
services;
• will be used by all those working in both the voluntary and statutory agencies;
• requires agencies to share information in order to promote the best interests and welfare of all children. Trust, shared ownership and commitment are essential;
• will support the integration of a range of information and assessment from different professionals and agencies into a coherent view of a child's experiences, strengths and needs; and

• will improve the consistency and quality of assessments for all children.

Assessment is at the core of this framework since 'when children and young people move at key transition stages in their lives *important information can travel with them*' (Scottish Executive, 2005). The following triangle is not simply representing the whole child -it offers a template 'to structure thinking and information gathering' for all children and young people. Therefore this information should include 'a core set of biographical details', 'a chronological account of significant achievements, event and changes' and finally, 'appropriate information about the child's life and experience':
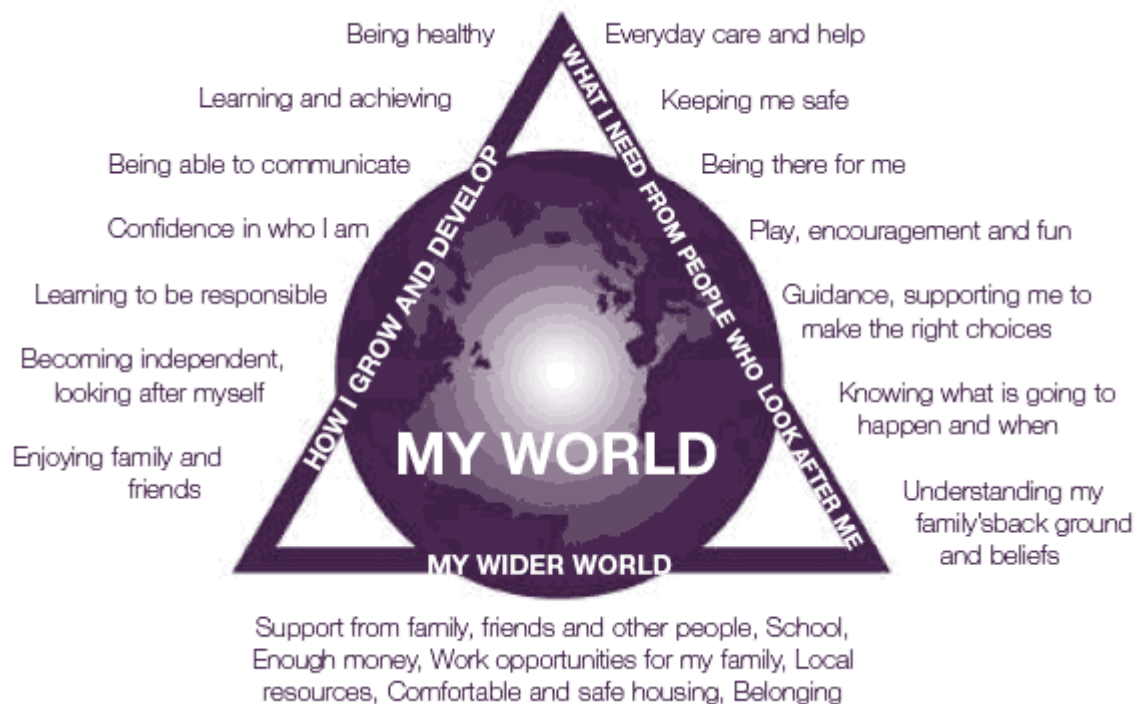
Fig. 2: The Whole Child: Physical, social, educational, emotional, spiritual and psychological development (Scottish Executive 2005)

The question which arises then is: if education as a public good is not sufficient to improve people's lives holistically and if one needs the integration of a range of knowledges and policies to achieve that, in what way is this different to other life stages? Thinking on the basis of lifelong learning discourses, which see learning during the lifecourse as always necessary, constant and developing, are the integrated children services the first step towards the integrated *human* services? And if this is the case, would this signal the move from catering for the 'whole child' to (managing knowledge about and) catering for the 'whole society'? What is the contribution of these new policies in re-inventing the public role of education?

Conclusions

This paper attempted to show the ways that the launch of the Integrated Children's Services policy initiative signals a radical re-conceptualisation of education as a public good. Education is no longer to be regarded as a distinctive policy field, with defined institutional structures and programmes related to the age and stage of the population of children and young people, but now forms part of *universal* services for children, that combine education with Health, Social Work, and the Police. At an initial stage, this unified approach to policy making was directed to the more disadvantaged children of Scottish communities; as it unfolds, it now includes all children *and* young people. Indeed, the policy echoes lifelong learning discourses; integrated services are to cater for all citizens 'from cradle to grave'. This would suggest a tendency to move from using old, professional, expert knowledge about public education towards more individual, personalised and integrated knowledge about society. Education as a distinctive policy field is severely weakened in this new state of affairs; I would suggest that arguments about its public role are weakened as a consequence, too.

The unified approach to policy making represented by ICS marks another shift in policy thinking in education in Scotland: it signals the further waning of the academic tradition in schooling, which, as described above, was best understood as a form of meritocracy through which ability was arguably recognised regardless of social background. Integrated Children Services represent a shift from schooling towards a new, market-based morality, where opportunities are distributed according to needs; part of this new consumer ethics is the co-option and the responsibilisation of the individual (Gewirtz, 2005). Finally, we witness a move from a heavily centralised system to one where local government and local decision making are meant to become more autonomous and active; nevertheless, the extent to which data management requirements will allow for any local adaptation and innovation is disputable and hence a problem for those pushing these changes.

Knowledge is the main engine powering these shifts since, as documented above, as people move through different stages in their lives, 'important information' travels with them. This information can be collated, monitored and interpreted by service providers, and even used as a basis for forecasting future needs. It is through bringing together ('integrating') this information that this new policy can be implemented. As Isakyaan et al. suggest:

> 'A new relation between governing and knowledge may be envisioned: expertise moves beyond the task of *policy informing*, and becomes *policy forming* in a more complex form of governing.' (Isaakyan et al, 2008, no page numbers)

Knowledge is key here: education policy is heavily dependent on knowledge policy and politics. To a large –and constantly increasing- extent, the management of knowledge appears to determine the orientation of education policy. This is not a neutral, a-political process; rather, it is heavily political and directed. This paper argues that the analysis of *knowledge policy* is crucial in order to explain changes in education governance in the knowledge society. The integrated services initiative is one aspect of this emerging reality. Above all, it signals a re-invention of the public education as having a much broader, and therefore more vague and malleable, role in creating a new society of known and governable individuals.

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^{i i} This paper draws on current research at the Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh and in particular work on the EU Framework 6 project 'Knowledge and Policy: The role of knowledge in the construction and regulation of health and education policy in Europe- convergences and specificities among nations and sectors 2006-2011'.