This paper examines 'policy' and 'policy response' through documentary analysis and an illustrative study of policy implementation. Our approach is informed by Foucault's (2009) theory that power relations in society are conditioned by a culturally generated set of ideas, and that these relations contain the space for both coercion and resistance. Our aim is to consider the potential for policy compliance and contestation by: (i) describing policy and policy response, drawing attention to the neoliberal hegemony that has come to dominate policy discourse globally, and (ii) considering how social agents respond to a particular instance of policy. We provide documentary analysis of the interpolation of leadership into policy development in Scotland following the OECD (2007) report, and offer a small scale illustrative study of the implementation of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland (GTCS, 2012). The head teachers in our study drew upon the discourse of marketisation when describing their response to policy on social justice. We consider this finding in light of the argument that our interaction with policy has been conditioned through previous instances of neoliberal discourse formation (Ball, 2008). We conclude by considering the implications of the neoliberal hegemony for policy debate.

This paper aims to explore the concept of 'policy', and to consider what is meant by 'policy response'. We adopt a critical perspective on the implementation of policy, viewing policy as both an attempt to solve problems and an attempt to persuade social actors to subscribe to particular beliefs that delineate action. We share Ball et al's (2012: 8) conviction that 'few policies arrive fully formed' and that the processes of policy enactment 'involve ad-hockery, borrowing, re-ordering, displacing, making do and re-invention'. However, we also endorse Ball's (1993: 12) view that policies 'create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed'. Consequently, in this paper we provide an analysis that acknowledges that policy is in part extemporised and in part the conscious attempt by policy makers to take 'action on the action of others' (Foucault, 2000: 345) for specific ends.

Our approach is informed by Foucault's (2009) theory that power relations in society are conditioned by a culturally generated set of ideas, described by Foucault as a *discourse*. These ideas may be embraced or rejected, and thus while we might observe the emergence of a particular ideology as a means to shape thought and demarcate action in society, the discursive nature of power relations makes it likely that the ideas that constitute a policy discourse have interacted with, and been moderated by, other ideas in the social nexus (Foucault, 2009). Harvey (2009) claims that this discursive interaction is 'managed' by the holders of power to ensure that the ideas that condition power are favourable to political interests, and he describes how governments seek to persuade the populace to accept policy by embedding novel ideas within the existing discourse. He states:

> For any way of thought to become dominant, a conceptual apparatus has to be advanced that appeals to our intuitions and instincts, to our values and our desires, as well as to the possibilities inherent in the social world we inhabit. If successful, this conceptual apparatus becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question. (Harvey, 2009: 5)

These 'instincts' and 'desires' are interrelated and have an appearance of consistency over time that masks their flexibility: for example, in the UK our sense of what it means to be an offender and our beliefs about how offenders should be punished have changed over time, yet our desire for justice appears to be inviolate and instinctive. According to Harvey (2009), policy is accepted by implementers only if it appeals to their existing instincts and desires, yet these instincts and desires are malleable: in order to guard against the calculated manufacture of policy consensus, social agents must respond to policy by exercising their ability to produce counter-moves and counter-discourses in the power 'game' (Foucault, 2000: 346). The analysis of policy response therefore has the potential to reveal compliance with policy (i.e. the fulfilment of the policy discourse) or contestation of policy (i.e. the production of a counter-discourse). If Harvey (2009) is correct, then the acceptance of a particular policy indicates a resonance between the culturally generated set of ideas that constitute this policy and the extant instincts and desires of its recipients.

In this paper we consider the potential for policy compliance and contestation. Our method is twofold: (i) we describe policy and policy response, drawing attention to the neoliberal hegemony that has come to dominate policy discourse globally, and

(ii) we consider how social agents respond to a particular instance of policy (e.g. do they contest this policy?) Here, we provide documentary analysis of the interpolation of leadership into policy development in Scotland following the OECD (2007) report, and offer a small scale illustrative investigation of the implementation of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland, as set out in the *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS, 2012).

Policy

Understandings of policy have moved beyond viewing it as a discrete entity, merely the output of a political system, to understanding policy as a process that brings certain principles or ideas into practice (Ham & Hill, 1993). Ranson (1995: 440) highlights the purpose of policy for governments to 'codify and publicise the values which are to inform future practice and thus encapsulate prescriptions for reform'. This viewpoint is in keeping with Olssen et al (2004: 72) who state 'Policy here is taken to be any course of action [....] relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources'. A connection is thus made between policy and governance, and more specifically understanding policy in relationship to 'the exercise of political power and the language [discourse] that is used to legitimate that process' (ibid: 72). Ball (1998: 124) contends that 'policies are [....] ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decisions', and as such they go to the heart of the relationship between the state and the welfare of its citizens (Hill, 1996). Thus the concept of policy is entangled with notions of public and social issues, the solutions to these, and the role of the state in providing these solutions. Education policy therefore represents an important site for the 'playing out' of political control and authority over the very nature of education, what is its purpose, how it manifests through structures and practices (for example through schooling, curriculum, pedagogy, etc), and what issues it prioritises and neglects (for example standards, equity etc) in different contexts of practice.

Because policy is bound up with a discourse of the state and the exercise of political power, education policy discourses that are supported by governments (either directly or indirectly) tend to dominate debate and prevail. In the wake of the economic crisis of the 1970s, proponents of neoliberalism have been invited by successive governments around the world to contribute to policy conversations

around areas of concern (such as the performance of schools), and via these conversations neoliberals have incrementally marginalised more collective social welfare-centred policy responses and ensured that the individualised neoliberal response is the common sense and 'politically inevitable' position (Friedman, 2002: xiv). As Ball (2008) observes:

> An unstable, uneven but apparently unstoppable flood of closely interrelated reform ideas is permeating and re-orientating education systems in diverse social and political locations with very different histories. This convergence has given rise to what can be called a generic global policy ensemble that rests on a set of basic and common policy technologies […] marketisation, managerialism and performativity and [...] the increasing colonisation of education policy by economic policy imperatives. (Ball, 2008: 39)

'Marketisation' is the move by countries to a 'market' system of provision in which decision-making and power is devolved to increasingly diversified types of educational providers drawn from state, voluntary and private sectors, frequently located in a competitive environment in which recipients of education (students and parents) are given greater 'consumer' choice (Ball, 2008). 'Managerialism' is the mechanism by which models and techniques from business management have been incorporated into state sector institutions such as schools in order to place emphasis on quality control, innovation, problem-solving and customer satisfaction (Ball, 2008). 'Performativity' refers to the process whereby the state sets institutions a range of targets to be achieved and establishes a system of performance measurement, such as league tables to compare pupils' performance in standardised tests. In so doing, the state no longer directly intervenes in dictating what and how institutions must operate; rather it facilitates a process of indirect governance whereby the actions of institutions become 'outputs' that may be objectively measured (Ball, 2008).

Cumulatively, this discursively informed and constructed global education policy ensemble of marketisation, managerialism and performativity has established a corporate 'vocabulary of economy, efficiency and entrepreneurship' (Ozga and Lingard, 2007: 71) that positions schools and pupils as, respectively, the producers and consumers of a commodity. In so doing, this policy ensemble has impacted on individuals, groups and institutions 'to reconstitute social relations' (Ball, 2008: 42-43). According to Sander (1998: 34) this reconfiguration of the relationship between schools and pupils is so well established that corporate values in education have

become 'norms which could not possibly be refused and opposed by anyone not being out of his/her senses'. Clearly, such a process is not neutral; as Foucault (1977: 49) observes, 'practices systematically form the objects of which they speak [....] Discourses are not about objects, they do not identify objects they constitute them and in practice of doing so conceal their own invention'. Thus specific education policy discourses are deliberately and constructively (re)used, (re)emphasised and (re)iterated until they enter the public consciousness and become reified.

Policy response

The phrase 'policy response' brings to mind a dialogue between policy makers, who devise educational targets and programmes, and policy implementers, who respond by putting these plans into action. In recent years, the nature of this dialogue has been examined by researchers interested in socio-cultural dynamics. For example, in her review of conceptions of policy, Nudzor (2009) identifies three dominant paradigms: (i) the 'problem-solving' model positions policy as a 'document of some sort' that is created by policy makers and put into practice by implementers (ibid: 93); (ii) the 'process model' positions policy as 'a site of struggle, negotiation and dialogue', with the outcome (e.g. leadership strategies) co-created by makers and implementers (ibid: 91); (iii) the 'theoretical eclecticism' model positions policy as the 'exercise of power and language that is used to legitimate the process' and draws upon the problem-solving model *and* the process model (ibid: 93).

The theoretical eclecticism view of policy, which is favoured by Nudzor (2009), features prominently in literature on power relations in democratic societies and resonates with Harvey's (2009) account of embedding, discussed earlier. As stated previously, marketisation, managerialism and performativity are the expression of the current global neoliberal ideology, and it is this ideology that may decisively condition our interaction with new ideas, articulating 'new ways of thinking about what we do, what we value and what our purposes are' (Ball, 2008: 42-43). The widespread endorsement of neoliberal beliefs ensures that policy consistent with neoliberal 'common sense' (Harvey, 2009: 5) is readily accepted or even goes unnoticed. For example, in their study of school leadership and equity in Canada, Goddard and Hart

(2007) discovered that policy on leadership for social justice was being tethered to a 'common sense' discourse of equality of opportunity that was, the authors claimed, detrimental to minority groups: although visible to Goddard and Hart (2007), the consolidation of the majority group's power through the implementation of this policy was, it seems, invisible to the implementers.

In their analysis of policy machinery, Bates et al (2011: 41) argue that a dispersed, rather than top-down, model of implementation is more likely to ensure that various stakeholders (e.g. parents and teachers) view policy as benign, rather than an alien interloper, and terms such as 'influential stakeholders' and 'policy community' (ibid: 42) are used to describe the multitude of individuals who must be 'on-board' with a policy message in order for it to be embraced. Clearly, this view is consistent with Harvey's (2009) account of the embedding of novel ideas. The conflation of policy with 'common sense' and the cultivation of policy ownership are engineered through such things as consultations and conferences, and of course policy documents play a key role in recruiting stakeholders' support. It has been argued that policy networks, such as the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL), 'are displacing hierarchy and markets and developing as the dominant mode of governance and social organisation' (Ball, 2012: 7), and such networks look likely to play an increasingly important role in the formation of policy consensus. Of course, when considering the manufacture of policy consensus it is important to bear in mind that we are not passive recipients of policy but active players in the policy 'game' (Foucault, 2000: 346), and networks have the potential to function as a means to articulate policy resistance, as well as to consolidate policy.

Policy response is highly contextualised, complex and fragmented. There are no universal 'truths' about policy implementation: the journey from principle to practice, even if discursively framed in a particular way, is a contested one which involves institutions and individuals in a process of 'creative social action' (Ball, 1998: 270). This is a crucial point, as contestation provides a political space in which dominant policy discourses are not simply accepted un-problematically at face value, but may be challenged, nuanced, reformulated, and changed. In the words of Honig (2006: 10), 'policy, people and places interact to shape how implementation unfolds' and policy responses occur. For this reason, Braun et al (2010: 549) talk not of policy

response but 'policy enactment', which they claim 'involves creative processes of interpretation and recontextualisation – that is, the translation through reading, writing and talking of text into action and the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices'. At a school-based level this enactment process reveals the ways in which policy is 'interpreted' and 'translated' in a context of time, space, and place. Such a standpoint on policy enactment is significant as it positions head teachers, teachers, governors, parents, and others engaged with educational reform as 'key actors, rather than merely as subjects in the policy process' (Braun et al, 2010: 549).

Illuminative study: the implementation of policy on school leadership in Scotland

Having considered theory on policy and policy response, we now offer an analysis of how policy moves from inception through to implementation. Specifically we consider the trajectory of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland, as set out in the *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS, 2012), launched in 2013. Our enquiry had three phases: (i) an analysis of the policy documents that led to the creation of the Standards; (ii) an online survey of 63 head teachers of nursery, primary and secondary schools in Scotland; (iii) follow-up telephone interviews with five of these head teachers.

Analysis of policy documents

An idea such as 'school leadership for equity' does not have a single starting point, but is the product of the blending and clashing of other ideas, the origins of which are, in many cases, lost in time (Barthes, 2001). This means that we were obliged to select what may be considered to be an arbitrary starting point for our investigation of the development and implementation of policy on school leadership and equity in Scotland. We began, therefore, by looking back to 2006, when the Scottish Government asked the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to examine the extent to which all pupils in Scotland were receiving a high standard of education. The resultant report, *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland* (OECD, 2007) contains the following headline statement:

> Children from poorer communities and low socio-economic status homes are more likely than others to under-achieve, while the gap associated with poverty and deprivation in local government areas appears to be very wide…Who you are in Scotland is far more important than what school you attend, so far as achievement differences on international tests are concerned. (OECD, 2007: 15)

In 2009, the Scottish Government invited Graham Donaldson to conduct a review of teacher education in Scotland in light of the OECD report. In his ensuing report, *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2011), Donaldson duly recapitulates the OECD's (2007) claim that, 'In Scotland, who you are is far more important than what school you attend', and that 'the school system as a whole is not strong enough to make this not matter' (ibid, 2011: 17). Seeking to understand and address this apparent weakness in the Scottish school system, Donaldson argues that 'the foundations of successful education lie in the quality of teachers and their leadership'(ibid: 2). The Executive Summary of the OECD (2007) report does not include school leadership in its 18 Recommendations, and we might therefore surmise that it was Donaldson who brought together the two conceptions of equity and school leadership in the Scottish context.

Donaldson's report inspired the Scottish government to establish the National Partnership Group (NPG) to implement his recommendations, and the NPG Sub-Group 3 declared that 'High quality leadership is crucial to improving the experiences and outcomes for learners' (NPG, 2012: 18), and proposed a Framework for Educational Leadership in Scotland. This framework, to be implemented from 2013, aims to 'offer high quality leadership opportunities to support a range of leaders, from aspiring to experienced, in identifying professional learning opportunities which will enable them to grow and develop as leaders' (NPG, 2012: 18-19). In order to support the Framework for Educational Leadership in Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) published its own report, *Standards for Leadership and Management: supporting leadership and management development* (GTCS, 2012). As might be expected, the GTCS report refers to both Donaldson (2011) and the NPG (2012), claiming that that 'Leadership is central to educational quality' (GTCS, 2012: 1) and that a commitment to social justice is part of a teacher's 'core' being (ibid, p. 4). The GTCS report may, therefore, be read as a reiteration and

expansion of the ideas contained in the reports by the NPG (2012), Donaldson (2011), and the OECD (2007).

In order to appreciate the alacrity of the establishment of the concept of leadership in the discourse of Scottish education, we might consider the evaluation of the Flexible Route to Headship (FRH) pilot project, which was funded by the Scottish Government in parallel with the OECD's (2007) investigation into schooling in Scotland. The authors of this evaluation, which was conducted in 2007-2008, 'were unable to find any explicit statement about leadership or reference to a preferred leader prototype that informed the thinking behind the FRH pilot' (Davidson et al, 2008: 12). Just a few years later, statements about leadership were ubiquitous. So, we can see that by creating a dialogue around school improvement and inviting different groups and individuals to contribute to this conversation, the Scottish Government has played a key role in enabling the introduction of a novel idea (i.e. school leadership) to enter into, and thereby alter, the existing discourse of equity and standards. Policy 'ownership', as described by Bates et al (2011: 41), has been encouraged through such things as consultations (e.g. the GTCS has a Consultation page on its website, dedicated to soliciting and publishing views on policy) and conferences (e.g. School Leaders Scotland holds an annual conference), and of course policy documents such as *Standards for Leadership and Management* (GTCS, 2012) have played a key role in recruiting stakeholders' support. These stakeholders include such groups as teachers' unions, parents' groups and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), who were tasked with launching the Standards for Leadership and Management.

Politics appear to have played a significant role in the development of the Standards for Leadership and Management. Although this paper does not permit an analysis of the impact of devolution on Scotland's policy development, we might note that the Scottish Government invited the OECD to conduct an investigation of Scottish schools 'within the framework of the Organisation's reviews of national policies for education' (OECD, 2007: 13) to create a uniquely Scottish report on pupils' performance relative to peers elsewhere in the world. The OECD, along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, is well known for promoting neoliberal ideology (Mahon, 2010), and we may therefore assume that in requesting

the OECD's assistance, Scottish politicians were amenable to neoliberal policy recommendations. Consistent with the OECD's neoliberal outlook, its report on Scotland's schools acknowledges that 'deprivation intensifies the effects of family socio-economic status' and that poverty is linked with poor educational attainment, but makes no policy recommendations around the eradication of poverty as a means to enhance pupils' academic performance (OECD, 2007: 16). Instead, the OECD suggests that equality of results might be obtained through management practices:

> Schools should be able to build the mix of staffing they need to tackle the particular challenges they face and to offer programmes which best address these challenges. Greater management freedom in these two areas [the curriculum and teaching resources] needs to be part of a compact with local government which establishes expectations in exchange for autonomy, and encourages and protects innovation and risk-taking through an authoritative mandate. (OECD, 2007: 16)

Thus, while the OECD *itself* acknowledges that educational underperformance is bound up with poverty, it ensures that the conversation about Scottish education does not involve discussion of non-neoliberal policy, such as the redistribution of wealth, by positioning school management as the solution to Scotland's alleged problems. When Donaldson (2011) and others joined this debate, they too positioned school management as the foremost solution to inequity, and thus implicitly ruled out other responses to social injustice, such as progressive taxation. Interestingly, the ease with which consensus coalesced around the idea that inequity is a problem that should be 'managed' by school leaders indicates that the OECD's managerial recommendations resonated with existing beliefs and values in Scotland.

The re-imagining of social justice as a private matter that requires behavioural management, rather than a public matter that requires economic intervention, is consistent with the neoliberal belief that 'There is no such thing as society' (Thatcher,1987). However, the emergence of this new public management theory has not been accompanied by a slackening of government control over social policy. In fact, Jones et al (2008: 22) argue that contemporary education policy is 'tightly connected to state objectives'. Indeed, policies on such things as school leadership and equity, which *leave intact* structural constraints on social mobility, may be described as the deliberate manifestation of a 'winner takes all' conception of human interaction. According to Jones et al:

> Governments seek undoubtedly to *manage* social difference, through educational and social programmes of many kinds, but the idea that high levels of inequality are both objectionable and eradicable has no place in policy. (Jones et al, 2008: 23-24, italics in original)

Of course, policy documents do not proclaim that inequality is neither objectionable nor eradicable: as stated previously, policy makers take pains to ensure that policy appeals to extant values, and it would be a mistake to suppose that policy that denies social justice is simply imposed by government on the populace. Nevertheless, in the Standards for Leadership and Management, leadership is defined along neoliberal lines as:

> …the ability to develop a vision for change, which leads to improvements in outcomes for learners and is based on shared values and robust evaluation of evidence of current practice, [and the ability to] mobilise, enable and support others to develop and follow through on strategies for achieving that change. (GTCS, 2012: 2)

Management is defined as 'the operational implementation and maintenance of the practices and systems required to achieve this change' (ibid: 2). According to the GTCS, head teachers must commit to:

> …the principles of democracy and social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable practices in relation to: age, disability, gender and gender identity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation. (GTCS, 2012: 4)

It is apparent, then, that the GTCS believes that school leaders have a responsibility for equity in Scottish education, and prescribes a set of practices to ensure that school leaders fulfil this duty.

Our empirical investigation

In the attempt to discover if these ideas about social justice resonate with school leaders (i.e. gauge the policy response), the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and its academic partners in the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNosL) UK group commissioned a small-scale survey to gain the views of Scottish head teachers on the Standards for Leadership and Management, with a specific focus on the standards relating to social justice. In June 2013, head teachers in every Scottish Local Education Authority (n = 32) were invited via email to take part in an online survey, which asked heads to respond to statements taken from *The Standards for Leadership and Management: supporting leadership and*

management development (GTCS, 2012). The survey employed a Likert-type response format and also contained free response boxes. Sixty-three head teachers from nursery, primary and secondary schools across Scotland completed the online survey. Five of these head teachers (one nursery; one secondary; three primary) took part in in-depth follow-up telephone interviews in September 2013. The purpose of the interviews was to enable these respondents to expand upon comments made in the free response boxes of the online survey.

In soliciting views on the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland, we were interested in gauging the extent to which head teachers' views on social justice resonate with the neoliberal hegemony as described by Harvey (2009), and to discover if head teachers are making a counter-move in the policy game as envisaged by Foucault (2000) or are simply complying with policy. The extremely low response rate to the questionnaire renders any quantitative analysis of the findings unfeasible, and the qualitative self-selective sample is also low. However, the free responses and the telephone interviews did provide a degree of qualitative engagement. Thus while our empirical work is presented as illustrative, rather than evidential, it explores some of the issues around the reception of policy and identifies some emergent themes. (Note: The low response rate may reflect a lack of awareness on the part of the head teachers of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice in Scotland: although the policy was published in December 2012, a number of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) did not officially launch the Standards until September 2013).

Discussion of our illustrative findings
The school leaders in our study appeared to endorse, or at least accept, what Jones et al (2008: 22) describe as the new public management system of central regulation and decentralised operational management: when asked what they believe is the purpose of the Standards for Social Justice, head teachers identified their utility as a means to support operational management, rather than a means to support equity. For example:

> I think the purpose of the Standards is to enable us to realise that we need professional standards – a whole network of standards. (Telephone interview)

> We need to have standards – we have a National Curriculum – how could anyone know that we are doing things right, if there weren't standards to measure yourself against? (Telephone interview)

> The purpose of the Standards is to ensure consistency of leadership across all establishments, and to ensure there is a degree of quality assurance and clarity of expectation. Before there was a lack of clarity, there was the HMI expectation of end point delivery, but not enough information of how to sustain the journey to get there. (Telephone interview)

It is perhaps surprising that no one challenged the assumption that it is possible to address social justice through school leadership strategies, or that it is reasonable to expect school leaders to 'manage' social justice in the free market society. In some instances the head teachers provided a tautological account of the value of the Standards, claiming that the Standards are important because it is important to have standards. This finding arguably reflects the consensus that has coalesced around the idea that all social problems have a bureaucratic solution, and that consistency of response is assured through standardisation; something identified as problematic by Max Weber (1969) more than a century ago

In the online survey, the respondents were invited to complete a free response box detailing 'anything different or innovative that you are or may be doing in your leadership practice in response to the Standards on Social Justice'. The responses included forming active partnerships with local groups such as Fair Trade; enrolling on a free EdX Harvard course on social justice; supporting the development of a Learning Council; helping disenfranchised parents and young people access services to which they are entitled; implementing a buddy system and mentoring system in school, and updating the school's Global Citizenship policy and programme of study. This finding tentatively suggests that head teachers may be able to identify examples of initiatives that support social justice, and we might note in particular that the Standards appear to have prompted a deeper engagement with the concept of social justice (through the EdX Harvard course) and the desire to work with the local community to address disenfranchisement. It is surprising, then, that the perceived function of the Standards is to support management practice, rather than directly address social inequity.

The preoccupation with management in Scottish education has been cultivated through policy documents such as *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland* (OECD, 2007), and *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2011), which argue respectively that the educational underperformance of poor children may be improved through school management, and that equity is linked to school leadership. Interestingly, a number of respondents cited the consistency between the Standards and other policy documents on school management as evidence of their validity, and seemed to place a high value on the consistency and practicability of the Standards, rather than on any novel ability they may confer in terms of addressing inequity. Indeed, one participant speculated that if the Standards on Social Justice did not appear to contribute to operational efficiency, they would in all likelihood be disregarded:

> The workload is such at the moment that very few people are in a position or have the capacity to take on anything beyond what is perceived to be core business. If it's not something that is perceived as something that is going to make a difference to what you are doing in your establishment *tomorrow*, then there's probably a pretty fair chance that it's going to be allowed to slip by until such a time that it is actually slapped into your face, "You're going to have to do this by, whenever". (Telephone interview)

It seems, then, that social justice must be identified as a part of sound management in order for policy on social justice to be accorded operational significance: cut adrift from the discourse of managerialism, the concept of social justice, even in its neoliberal guise, cannot be readily assimilated by teachers, who have been conditioned to think of good practice almost exclusively in terms of performance management (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

Ball et al (2012: 622) argue that policy provides a managerial 'vocabulary for thinking about practice' that is erasing from memory earlier 'vocabularies of possibility', including economic redistribution as a solution to inequity; something which our study appeared to confirm. In the survey, most of the head teachers identified activities to enhance social justice in their schools, yet when asked 'Could you take one particular standard and talk about how that has influenced you?' respondents did not employ a vocabulary of possibilities that we might identify as 'Freirean' or progressive (Larson & Murtadha, 2002): instead they discussed managerial issues

such as staff roles and responsibilities and strategies to disseminate ideas about good practice. For example:

> I would say part 3.4 'Build and sustain partnerships with colleagues, learners, parents and other stakeholders to meet the identified needs of all learners' – I would say that I am already doing that, but the standards do help you to know that you are doing it right. (Telephone interview)

> [The Standards] are helping me with my need to keep up with educational development and management. (Telephone interview)

The respondents' preoccupation with mangerialism made it difficult to ascertain the thinking behind their interest in 'Consulting children and involving them more' and 'Leading in support inclusion for all children', which they had listed as social justice activities in the free response box of the survey. Having identified strategies to improve the performance of their school through self-reflection, staff development and the co-ordination of practice –which under managerialism are the guarantors of equity - head teachers in our study did not feel the need to elaborate on how such policy ensures that economically and socially deprived pupils have the same life chances as more privileged pupils. Indeed, it would be unreasonable to expect them to do so: Ball (2012: 35) criticises the 'new professionalism', whereby social actors are required to take 'responsibility' and have '"appropriate" reflexive moral capacities', often in relation to issues that reside beyond their understanding or control. One head teacher in our study had, in fact, enrolled on the EdX Harvard course on social justice in order to develop his knowledge of this issue, but was unable to complete the course because such intensive engagement with the concept of equity was not compatible with his workload.

Neoliberal managerialism places a bureaucratic strain on school leaders (Ryan, 2012); minimises space for critical reflection (Couldry, 2010), and obliges school leaders to implement policy that is not fully interrogated. In our study, the lack of clarity over social justice (beyond its technical 'solution') was accompanied by a belief that there is no real dialogue between policy makers and implementers. For example:

> We are not really encouraged to question local or national policy decisions. When we are consulted our views do not always seem to be taken onboard. (Online survey)

Although head teachers in our survey expressed agreement with the statement, 'Professionalism also implies the need to ask critical questions of educational policies and practices' (GTC, 2012: 6), they expressed the belief that, in the words of one respondent, the 'cultural tools are not there to feed up to policy makers'. The current use of steering groups for policy formation means that most head teachers are not directly consulted about the definition of leadership or social justice, and thus while head teachers' professional identity is bound up with the need to ask questions about policy, they are not sure who, if anyone, is listening to them.

This finding is consistent with Couldry's (2010) cynicism about democracy in neoliberal societies such as the UK. According to Couldry (2010: 64), neoliberalism has abandoned, as unnecessary, the vision of democracy as a form of social organisation in which decision makers' legitimacy is measured by the degree to which it takes account of its subjects' 'particular voices'. Couldry states:

> For me to feel that a group of which I am a member speaks for me, I must be able to recognize my inputs in what the group says and does: if I do not, I must have satisfactory opportunities to correct that mismatch….Democratic politics are based on the possibility of such acts of recognition of the individual voice in collective voice. (Couldry, 2010: 101)

If head teachers cannot recognise their individual voice in the collective voice of education policy, then Couldry's theory suggests that they will feel, at best, superficially engaged with policy on leadership for social justice, and at worst, alienated from it entirely. In their account of how neoliberal governmentalities shape subjectivity, Ball and Olmedo (2013: 90) paint a disheartening picture of contemporary education, in which teachers and school leaders are valued for 'their productivity alone', and their 'value as a person is eradicated'. If head teachers are only valued for their compliance with Leadership Standards for Social Justice, rather than valued as sentient beings with insights into social justice that they may wish to develop and share with others, then we might question the use of the term 'leadership'.

Arguably, the lay perception of a leader as a charismatic figure who influences people by 'providing purpose, direction, and motivation' (Ellyson et al, 2012: 8), and to whom others surrender their will in exchange for success under her authority (Weber, 1969) is at odds with the managerial vision of the leader as someone who

complies with directives issued by external agencies, and is valued according to the efficiency and efficacy of her compliance. These managerial directives are, according to Weber (1969) objective, calculable and without regard to persons: in short, mangerialism does not respect the maverick or his/her spontaneous action. If head teachers are not consulted over the development of Leadership Standards, then adherence to this policy is little more than a means for school leaders to 'manage' compliance with externally imposed aims.

Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to elucidate the relationship between policy and policy response, and to consider the potential for compliance with policy or contestation of policy inherent in power relations (Foucault, 2009). Our analysis of the manufacture of policy consensus, and in particular the consensus that has coalesced around the set of ideas that constitutes the discourse of marketisation (i.e. consumer choice; quality control; performance measurement) suggests that neoliberalism has become accepted internationally as the 'common sense' and thus non-contestable ideological position (Harvey, 2009: 5). Consequently theorists cited in this paper, such as Ball (2008) and Sander (1998), note that it is difficult for social agents to make a counter-move in the power 'game' by challenging the neoliberal hegemony (Foucault, 2000: 346). Our own study illustrates the difficulty of viewing such things as 'social justice' through a non-neoliberal lens and offering solutions to inequity that are not managerial. Indeed, the tautological account of the need for standards offered by one head teacher in our telephone interview arguably demonstrates how hard it is to think outside the parameters of performance management. This does not, of course, mean that the head teachers in our study were naïve or unaware of the ideological underpinning of the Leadership Standards for Social Justice, but it seems that the managerial principles of standardisation and measurement have become unimpeachable tenets of sound educational practice, regardless of how one feels about neoliberalism as a political doctrine. In the words of one respondent:

> They have a role; you have to have standards in the real world, even if
> there's a neoliberal political agenda driving the whole thing, standards as a
> principle I'm not against. They have a role. (Telephone interview)

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Although it is not possible for us to know *why* individual head teachers drew upon the discourse of marketisation when describing their response to policy on social justice, it seems likely that the Leadership Standards for Social Justice resonate with their managerial 'instincts' and 'desires' (Harvey, 2009: 5), which have been conditioned through previous instances of neoliberal discourse formation dating back to the 1970s (Ball, 2008). This finding reveals a serious problem facing democratic societies today: how do we sustain debate about the acceptability (or not) of neoliberal policy if a neoliberal consensus has already been established? Friedman's (2002) desire for neoliberal policy solutions to become naturalised as 'common sense' appears to have been fulfilled: welfarist solutions to inequity are now uncommon and perhaps perceived to be nonsensical; certainly they were not identified as a viable alternative to neoliberalism by participants in our study. Fukuyama (1992) may have been premature when he talked about 'the end of history', yet the global dominance of neoliberal ideas may well signal the end of meaningful policy debate.

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