

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**The Development of the City Technology
College Programme: 1980s conservative ideas
about English secondary education**

Elizabeth Cookingham Bailey

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis explores the discussion of conservative ideas about secondary education in England between 1979 and 1986. Education policy reforms in the 1980s reflected changing ideologies about the role of the state and about the role of education in society. City Technology Colleges (CTCs), proposed in 1986, embodied many of these changes. CTCs were a new type of school within the state system, with control over their own funding, admissions and operations; they were intended to have a technology focus within a broad curriculum and were partially funded and managed by industry sponsors. The CTC programme is relevant to the study of the history of education for two reasons: because of the relationship of the CTC policy to the general discussion of ideas in an important period of reform; and because of its legacy in the policies that followed.

This thesis adds to the historical narrative about the 1980s discussion of different conservative education policy ideas concerning choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education, and funding and management. This thesis also considers the influence of ideas discussed by external groups on internal Conservative Government policy discussion. The similarity of ideas and language between the external and internal discussions indicates the important contribution of interest groups to the intellectual atmosphere in this period. This thesis connects these ideas to those that informed the CTC policy. The elements of the policy and the ideas referenced by actors introducing the policy are examined to determine how they reflected prominent contemporary thinking. This thesis draws on archival and published documents and on a few interviews. The findings underscore the role of certain key actors in the development of the CTC policy as well as the consistency of ideas used by conservatives throughout this period, including those that underlay the CTC policy.

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List of Abbreviations

APS – Assisted Places Scheme

ASI – Adam Smith Institute

CBI – Confederation of British Industry

CPS – Centre for Policy Studies

CPSESG – Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group

CTC – City Technology College

DES – Department of Education and Science

ERA – 1988 Education Reform Act

FEVER - Friends of the Education Voucher Experiment in Representative Regions

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate

IEA – Institute of Economic Affairs

ILEA – Inner London Education Authority

LEA – Local Education Authority

MSC – Manpower Services Commission

TVEI – Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

Glossary

Black Papers – Series of publications between 1969 and 1977 by conservative authors on issues in all areas of education

Comprehensivisation – Introduction of all-ability schools called comprehensives

Direct Grant Schools – Independent schools, primarily grammar school, which received direct grants from the government to provide free places for pupils

Eleven-Plus Examination – Entrance test to grammar schools which could involve verbal or non-verbal reason and mathematics or English

Green Paper – Government consultation document

Her Majesty's Inspectorate – Inspection body for schools

Hillgate Group – Conservative pressure group with a focus on education policy

Local Education Authorities – Established by the 1902 Education Act by county councils to administer school-based education within local authorities

Manpower Services Commission - Established in 1973 to handle education and training, answering to the Department for Employment

Mixed-Ability Education – Practice of school organisation where pupils with a range of abilities are taught together

Norwood Report – 1943 publication by the Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, chaired by Cyril Norwood, arguing for tripartite education

Number 10 Policy Unit – Organisation designed to provide policy support and advice to the Prime Minister

Schools Branch – Division of the civil service within the Department of Education and Science

School Curriculum Development Committee – Established in 1984 to replace the Schools Council and to discuss ideas about curriculum reform

Setting – Practice of school organisation where pupils are grouped based on same ability in a particular subject

Streaming – Practice of school organisation where pupils are grouped based on same academic ability

Taylor Report – Publication of the committee of enquiry established in 1975 to review the management of schools in England and Wales. Chaired by Tom Taylor

Tripartite Education – System of education introduced in the 1940s which consist of grammar schools, technical schools and secondary modern schools

White Paper – Publication which includes government department policy proposals

1. Introduction

Introduction

Education policy in England underwent major reform thirty years ago in terms of provision, curriculum, funding and management. These reforms were introduced from 1979-1988 by three successive Conservative Governments. Historians of education emphasise the significance of this period of policy reform as one of the most active in the 20th century (Aldrich, 2002; Jones, 2003). The policies introduced in this period included: limiting the control of local authorities over education; creating a national curriculum; implementing diversity and choice initiatives; and emphasising employment-focused elements in secondary education (Simon, 1999). The reforms of the 1980s reflected changing ideologies both about the role of the state and also about the role of education in society. The period of focus of this thesis is 1979 to 1986.

City Technology Colleges (CTCs), first proposed in 1986, embodied many of these aspects of education reform. Secretary of State for Education and Science Kenneth Baker introduced the policy at the 1986 Conservative Party Conference. The CTCs were a new type of school within the state system, with control over their own funding, admissions and operations; the schools were intended to have a technology focus as well as a broad curriculum and were partially funded and managed by industry sponsors (Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty, Edwards, & Gewirtz, 1993). To facilitate the management of the CTC programme, particularly location of sites for the schools and recruitment of sponsors, the CTC Trust was established in 1987. Historians note the symbolic importance of the CTCs as a representation of many of the key elements of the Conservative approach to education policy introduced after the 1987 General Election (McCulloch, 2002; Simon, 1999). The CTC programme effectively “prepared the way” for many policy elements proposed in the flagship Conservative education policy reform, the 1988 Education Reform Act (Evans, 1999: 105).¹

The CTCs were established in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, but owing to difficulties in obtaining industry sponsors and locating sites for the schools

¹ The final major education act of the 1980s was the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), which increased parental choice in education, introduced a national curriculum and allowed local management of schools (1988, ch. 40).

the number of schools never exceeded fifteen. Beyond their significance as a testing ground for some of the ideas set out in the later 1988 Education Reform Act, the CTCs have a distinct legacy in their own right, shaping the landscape of education policy to the present day. The CTC legacy, of schools with a particular curricular focus, could be seen in the 1992 Technology Colleges programme, later the Specialist Schools programme (Edwards & Whitty, 1997; Exley, 2007; West & Bailey, 2013).² The various policy elements of the CTCs can also be seen in the direct funding contracts between the schools and the central government as well as the sponsorship element of the City Academy programme, later Academies programme, created in 2000 (Chitty, 2009a; Ryan, 2008; Walford, 2014; West & Bailey, 2013).³ The original Academies also had specific curricular focuses which is again similar to the idea of a specialist curricular element in the CTCs (Ryan, 2008).

There are therefore two reasons why the CTC programme is of interest in the study of the history of education: first, because of the relationship of the CTC policy to the general discussion of ideas in an important period of reform, and second, because of the important legacy it had in the policies that followed. In the first case, studying the discussion of ideas about education in a period of reform and change, can be thought of as studying the history of education for its own sake (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000). The study of history for its own sake “furnish[es] an account of past events” and an “interpretation of those events” (Aldrich, 2002: 1). This involves bringing new information, or a new critical eye, to enhance the existing narrative and understanding of the past. In the second case, the study of history has a more applied purpose in that the past allows greater understanding of the present context (Saran, 1985). This means studying the ideas that influenced the creation of a policy that has a significant legacy in current policy. As the historian of education, Richard Aldrich argues: “Some historical study may be of particular interest and value for our own generation if it places recent and contemporary events in historical perspective” (Aldrich, 2003: 137). This thesis addresses both aspects: providing a historical account of the discussion of ideas about secondary education in the 1980s to enhance the historical narrative about this period of reform, and highlighting the

² Technology colleges, introduced in 1993, were intended to build off the success of CTCs and as proposed were also specialist secondary schools with a technology focus (Department for Education, 1992). These were eventually expanded further to cover additional specialisms, and were renamed ‘specialist schools’ (West & Bailey, 2013).

³ The requirement to secure financial sponsorship was removed in 2009 and the sponsorship requirement for new academies was removed under the Academies Act of 2010 (West & Bailey, 2013).

ideas that fed into the CTC policy which can help understanding of how the present context emerged.

One aim of the thesis is to add to the historical narrative about the 1980s discussion of different conservative education policy ideas concerning *choice and diversity*, *the aims and purposes of education*, and *management and funding*. Research on the late 1970s through the mid-1980s highlights the important role played not just by actors inside government but also by various think tanks and pressure groups in forming conservative thinking on economic and social policy in general, and education policy in specific (Cockett, 1995; Knight, 1990; Lawton, 1994). In order to analyse the full atmosphere in which conservative education ideas developed in this period, the views of these groups regarding these three areas of education policy also need to be examined. In this thesis this is defined as *external discussion* as it is expressed in publications, meetings or statements external to the government. This is in contrast to what is referred to throughout the thesis as *internal discussion*, which refers to discussion of ideas by those who are in the government, primarily focusing on the Department of Education and Science (DES). Internal discussion includes private meetings or correspondence on policy proposals, political speeches by DES politicians or in official policy documents. Notably there was considerable *movement* of individuals into and out of government who were very active in discussions of education policy in this period. With the movement of actors, there was considerable overlap and transferring of personnel between the DES and various external interest groups from the late 1970s into the mid-1980s. Many politicians and political adviser had close associations with external interest groups before, during and after their tenure in the DES. The associations of these individuals facilitated the movement of ideas about education between these two areas. Focusing on the movement of ideas from external to internal discussion allows for more detail and depth on the atmosphere of ideas about education policy in this period.

The title of this thesis is intended to include these larger discussions on conservative thought in this period, rather than limiting the focus to only those within the Conservative Party. Whilst as just noted, there was considerable movement of personnel and ideas between external interest groups and the Conservative

Government, the conception of this thesis as focusing on broader conservative ideas also captures the ideas that did not become Party or Government policy.

Additionally, it would be fair to say that many of the policy elements of the CTCs in particular were influenced by neo-liberal ideology, and were a radical break from traditional education policy. In the field of history of education, the *New Right* is more commonly used as a descriptor of the ideological influences in this period which captures both neo-liberal and conservative elements. This term is not used as commonly in social policy, which discusses this period more in terms of neoliberalism, but to conceptualize this thesis only in terms of neo-liberal ideas would be too narrow as many of the policy elements were also ideologically conservative in nature. The focus on conservative ideas in the title is intended to broadly capture both elements: the external influence on internal discussion and the ideological influences on the development of ideas.

Another aim of this thesis is to connect these broad ideas about choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education, and management and funding, to those that fed specifically into the CTC policy. In order to understand this better, the composite elements of the CTC policy and the ideas referenced by actors introducing the policy are examined to determine how they reflect (or do not reflect) the ideas and language used throughout this period. Historians and educationalists have also attempted to understand where the ideas that underlay the CTC policy came from, in particular the role of key political actors (politicians, advisers and civil servants) and the role of think tanks and pressure group members (Simon, 1999; Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). This thesis therefore also includes an examination in more depth and detail of how the agendas of the different external and internal actors may have influenced what ideas emerged in the CTC policy.

Looking at the two different aspects of the narrative -- the movement of ideas between external and internal discussion and the relationship of these ideas to elements of the CTC policy -- contributes new depth and detail to the current historical narrative. In particular, it adds a different perspective by focusing on these three key areas (choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education, and funding and management) and by exploring the role of the external discussion in influencing internal discussion.

The examination of the development of this policy and discussion of ideas could be approached from a number of different angles. The development of ideas occurs within a number of different tiers of discussion which could each be examined in turn. Initially there could be an examination of first tier, the larger context – the global and historical trends – that influenced the policy. The second tier consists of examination of interest group discussion and influence. The third tier involves examination of the institutional level and the making of policy within the government. The final tier involves the examination of the role of the media and the broader public debate regarding the policy. These tiers may have dynamic influences on each other and may not flow in only one direction. This thesis focuses primarily on the middle two tiers as constraints of time and space would have not made it possible to get at the depth and detail of movement of ideas across all four tiers.

In terms of the larger context, to properly contextualise the CTCs within the larger international movement would have resulted in a different narrative as more exploration would be needed of secondary education within different countries. Where possible within the discussion of ideas it is important to note some consistency or divergence in the longer trends in conservative thought regarding education, but again a larger focus on this in the thesis would have resulted in a different narrative. Additionally, further expansion of the institutional level into the influence of other areas of government would make it difficult examine the specific dynamics of the external and internal discussions in detail; where possible reference is made to different areas of government outside DES. By contrast, this thesis does not focus on the dynamics within the institutional tier during this period. Authors have already explored in detail the relationships within the DES in this period (Knight, 1990; Lawton, 1994) and this thesis seeks to add detail to select cases studies that focus on ideas in the three key areas. Finally, this thesis only briefly touches on the public debate surrounding the implementation process and the legacy of the policy. These areas have also been researched extensively and whilst there is value in exploring the way the ideas changed in implementation and were discussed by the media, there is not sufficient time or space to expand on the existing narrative in these areas.

1.1 Research Questions

In summation, the question at the heart of this work is: how were prevailing ideas about school-based education utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy in the 1980s? In order to address this overall query, there are three research questions which are explored throughout this thesis.

- Research Question 1: How did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science?

This thesis considers the movement of ideas from the external to the internal discussions. Examination of the internal discussion focuses on ideas discussed within the Conservative Government by politicians, civil servants and policy advisers. This thesis will primarily focus on the DES with some references to other government departments. The areas of discussion focused on are: choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education and funding and management. This study aims to investigate the variety and complexity of the ideas in the different areas.

- Research Question 2: What were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas?

Different actors' preferences for certain ideas can influence inclusion of those ideas in the discussions. This study therefore explores how the agendas of key actors related to their support of certain ideas both in the broader policy discussions about education and specifically within the creation of the CTC policy.

- Research Question 3: How were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy?

Earlier in this chapter these three areas were identified as key elements of the CTC policy, therefore making it possible for the thesis to explore how the broader discussions of these ideas by actors and interest groups in the 1980s emerge in the CTC policy.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on the three key areas of focus in secondary education explored in this thesis (choice and diversity; the aims and purposes of education; and funding and management) as well as existing work on the CTCs. This chapter establishes the historical narrative on which this thesis expands. It also explores how ideas are defined and understood in this thesis. The research questions explored in the remainder of the chapters are derived from the gaps in the literature that are identified in this chapter.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used to explore the research questions in this study. This chapter highlights the complexities of undertaking historical research but also the benefits of this method for exploring these research questions. In order to best answer research question 2, the chapter also highlights the rationale for focusing on specific think tanks, pressures groups and key actors outside and within the Conservative Governments from 1979 to 1986.

Chapter 4, the first empirical chapter, describes different ideas regarding choice and diversity in secondary education, including where rights and responsibilities lie and with whom and how education can address individual needs. It also looks at the means proposed to realise these ideas of choice and diversity. The chapter is divided into external and internal discussion with parallel sub-sections to show the movement of ideas so addressing research question 1. The final section of this chapter provides a detailed focus on a particular subset of discussions from 1981 to 1985 about how to diversify schooling; this shows where consensus emerged on different ideas both in external and internal discussion.

Chapter 5 explores ideas about the different aims and purposes of education that emerged from the discussions as well as the contradictions and complexities of the different viewpoints particularly regarding social and economic aims. As with chapter 4, the chapter is also divided into external and internal discussion to more specifically address research question 1. This chapter also addresses question 2 by comparing and contrasting the preferences of different politicians for technology education and how these might have influenced their selection of particular ideas.

Chapter 6 examines conservative discussions about how secondary education should be managed and funded. It seeks to understand how the partnership that managed education changed in this period as well as discussions of ideas of accountability and movements towards both decentralisation and centralisation of the management and funding of education. Similar to the previous empirical chapters, this chapter is also divided into external and internal discussion to explore research question 1.

Chapter 7 is the final empirical chapter which brings these larger discussions together to explore the ideas that emerged in the development of the CTCs. It addresses research question 3. This chapter also tells the story of the creation of the CTC policy using a mix of secondary and primary sources, which shows the competing agendas concerning the policy from different actors to answer research question 2.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion of the thesis and links the findings discussed in the empirical chapters to the three research questions whilst drawing on material discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter also notes the overall contributions of this work to the historical narrative.

2. Policy Context and Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter introduces the literature that is relevant to the research undertaken in this thesis. It begins by explaining how ideas will be defined and used throughout the thesis. The middle three sections of this chapter provide the historical narrative and relevant conceptual material on the three broad educational areas that are explored in this thesis: choice and diversity, aims and purposes of education, and management and funding. In each case there is a discussion of the historical context, 1980s Conservative policies and policy goals, and understandings of the underpinning concepts. The final section sets out the existing research on City Technology Colleges (CTCs), specifically regarding the creation of the policy. The chapter concludes with an identification of gaps in the literature that the research questions seek to address.

2.1 Researching Ideas: Definition and Usage

As discussed in Chapter 1, this thesis seeks to explore the different ideas about education from 1979 to 1986; therefore, it first outlines how ideas are defined by political scientists and why they are focused on in this thesis. The focus on ideas is important for two reasons: first, it provides a way of understanding the alternatives available to policymakers, and second, it allows for understanding a key way in which interest groups external to government play a role in the creation of policy.

Political scientists have devoted considerable attention to ideas. This thesis focuses on what are referred to as ‘policy ideas’; there are three theories that provide the basis for understanding these policy ideas -- those of Peter Hall, Sheri Berman, and John Campbell. Hall talks about a framework of ideas that surrounds the creation of policy which includes the policy goals, policy instruments or mechanisms, and “the problems they are meant to be addressing” (Hall, 1993: 279). Hall understands mechanisms as the means of obtaining a policy goal; this is the understanding of policy instruments and mechanisms used in this thesis. These different elements – goals, mechanisms and problems – are the policy ideas that constitute a ‘policy paradigm’ (Hall, 1993). Berman focuses on the importance of ‘programmatic beliefs’ which act as “guidelines for practical activity” (Berman, 1998: 21). These

programmatic beliefs are built on underlying theories that govern actions and desired goals for those actions (Berman, 1998). These programmatic beliefs held by policymakers are ‘guidelines’ or ‘roadmaps’ for future activity (Béland, 2005; Berman, 1998; Cox & Béland, 2013; Emmerij, Jolly, & Weiss, 2005; Goldstein & Keohane, 1993).

Campbell outlines two categories of ideas that are primarily descriptive and theoretical, which further develop Hall and Berman’s understandings of ideas. The first are programs or programmatic ideas which are used by policymakers to outline a course of action in policy debates or discussions (Campbell, 1998). The second, paradigms, are the assumptions that policymakers have that constrain the potential solutions they will consider (Campbell, 1998). Using a combination of Hall, Berman and Campbell it is possible to see that there are larger conceptions of the possible policy goals, potential mechanisms (or means of achieving these goals) and underlying understanding of problems which constitute the larger policy paradigm; the different elements of these paradigms constitute the policy ideas that can be used by policymakers to create policy. These policy ideas can be thought of as the alternatives which are available to policymakers; policymakers therefore select from potential policy ideas, or alternatives, to determine what becomes policy (Béland & Cox, 2013; Béland, 2005; Goldstein & Keohane, 1993; Kingdon, 2003; McDonnell, 2007).

The study of ideas also requires consideration of ideas entering into the policy realm from interest groups external to government, frequently from think tanks or pressure groups (Campbell, 1998; John, 1999; Kingdon, 2003; Yee, 1996). Interest groups, in particular think tanks, can have a formal or informal relationship with policymakers in the introduction of policy ideas; formal in that the think tanks can be “a source of policy ideas and innovation” and informal in that “they have intellectual authority that can be used to give established policy positions additional credibility” (Stone, 2004: 8). Think tanks, therefore, have a formal role in introducing policy ideas into the policy process and an informal role in providing credibility for actors placing those policy ideas on political agendas. This informal relationship can be thought of as ‘atmospheric influence’ wherein interest groups are feeding into the general discussion of ideas to “influence the general climate of thinking about a policy”

(James, 2000: 163). This can then result in a change in the ‘framework’ of ideas held by policymakers (James, 2000). Think tanks can exercise this influence to develop thinking in a particular policy area or about a specific policy (James, 2000). Interest groups can have atmospheric influence by promoting policy ideas that set the terms of debate, define the problems and/or shape policy perceptions (Stone, 2004).

2.2 Choice and Diversity

In the following sub-sections, the ideas of choice and diversity that are explored in this thesis are laid out. This section as a whole is intended to set out the historical context for choice and diversity discussions in secondary education as well as to highlight relevant policies from 1979 to 1986 that will be referenced later. The final sub-sections explore some of the concepts that underlie choice and diversity policies and help to define the terms used by conservatives which are relevant to understanding the variations in policy ideas discussed in the empirical chapters.

2.2.1 Context: Early Diversity and Selection

The 1944 Education Act ensured free secondary education for all pupils between the ages of 11 and 15 (Glennerster, 2000; McCulloch, 1994, 2002; Simon, 1999).⁴ The Act also established the national Ministry of Education, which encouraged local education authorities (LEAs) (see glossary) to establish a tripartite system for secondary education (Glennerster, 2000; McCulloch, 1994, 2002; Simon, 1999). The Ministry’s 1947 pamphlet, *The New Secondary Education*, set out guidance for this system, which included Secondary Modern Schools, Grammar Schools and Technical Schools (Glennerster, 2000; McCulloch, 1994, 2002; Simon, 1999). The tripartite structure built off the argument in the *1943 Norwood Report* that there should be schools that catered to the differing abilities of pupils; grammar schools for pupils with a capacity for abstract thought, technical schools for those with technical aptitude and secondary modern schools for more practically minded pupils (McCulloch, 1994; Simon, 1999). As implemented, the system set up by most local education authorities was closer to a bipartite system (i.e. secondary modern and grammar schools) despite the Ministry’s stated support of technical education (Chitty, 2009a; Gordon, Aldrich, & Dean, 1991; Simon, 1999). Many areas of the

⁴ In the 1930s a number of endowed independent schools were given grants by the government to offer a portion of free places and these became direct grant schools under the 1944 Education Act (Simon, 1999).

country used the eleven-plus examination to select pupils for admission to grammar schools with the majority of pupils who did not receive a pass mark attending secondary modern schools (Glennerster, 2000; Jones, 2003). At the time researchers argued that there were class differences between the schools and that middle class pupils took up the majority of places at grammar schools (Floud, Halsey, & Martin, 1956; Hargreaves, 1968). The eleven-plus selection itself was a subject of controversy throughout the 1950s and 1960s and led to the creation of the comprehensive system⁵, to replace the tripartite system, which consisted of non-selective, all-ability schools (Glennerster, 2000; Jones, 2003; Tomlinson, 2005).

2.2.2 *Context: Criticism of the Comprehensive System and the Black Papers*

The 1964 Labour Government established the Department of Education and Science (DES) and in 1965 issued Circular 10/65 requesting that local education authorities reorganise schools along comprehensive lines (Glennerster, 2000; McCulloch, 1994, 2002; Simon, 1999).⁶ This was met with opposition from conservative educationalists who produced a series of pamphlets at the end of the 1960s into the late 1970s called the *Black Papers* (Jones, 2003; Lawton, 1992; Simon, 1999). The authors of the *Black Papers* were strongly critical of many aspects of the education policy of the period, in particular the introduction of the comprehensive system (Jones, 2003; Lawton, 1992; Simon, 1999). The *Black Papers* highlighted concerns about the lack of diversity in types of schooling within the comprehensive system and the impact that such would have on the development of individual pupil capacities (Simon, 1999). The *Black Papers* set the comprehensive system in opposition to the more differentiated system of the tripartite era which streamed by ability (Simon, 1999). The *Black Papers* were also concerned with the ‘egalitarian’ and ‘progressive’ focus of the schools and the impact on standards, particularly for the ‘most able’ pupils (Chitty, 2009a; McCulloch, 1986; Simon, 1999). The 1970 Conservative Government attempted to slow the movement towards full comprehensive reorganisation. The DES, under the new Secretary of State for Education and Science Margaret Thatcher, issued Circular 10/70, which allowed

⁵ Comprehensive education only existed in a small percentage of local education authorities following the 1944 Act (Simon, 1999).

⁶ The key change occurred in 1963 when a number of northern cities (e.g. Manchester and Liverpool) began to implement comprehensive education in their secondary schools, which was then taken up as an issue at the 1963 Labour Party Conference (Simon 1999). Historians of education argued that “the swing to comprehensive education was a deeply rooted, grass-roots movement which originated among local authorities.” (Simon, 1988:22)

local education authorities to choose between the systems they preferred, pursuing comprehensive reorganisation or maintaining elements of the tripartite system; this allowed for ‘co-existence’ between the two models of provision and diversity within the state system, one that included grammar schools and one that included comprehensive schools (Gordon et al., 1991; Simon, 1999).⁷ In 1976, the Labour Government effectively overturned this by stating that local authorities could not select pupils for admission (1976, ch. 81, sect. 1).⁸ Alongside the changing government views about comprehensive schools, two final *Black Papers* were published in 1975 and 1977, which advocated for increased parental choice in state education (Simon, 1999; Chitty, 2009); parental choice would be a key policy goal for the Conservative Governments in the 1980s.

2.2.3 Policies and Policy Goals: 1980s Reforms and Extending Parental Choice

There were two early Conservative Government policies that emphasised selection, choice and diversity. The first education reform of the new Conservative Government was the 1979 Education Act, which repealed the 1976 Act (1979, ch. 49, sect. 1). This Act gave local authorities the ability once again to select pupils at the age of eleven. The second reform, the 1980 Education Act, enabled parents to express a preference for a specific school, which local authorities would attempt to address as long as it did not conflict with existing admission arrangements (1980, ch. 20, sect. 6).⁹ The 1980 Education Act also established the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), which covered some of the cost of attendance for high-achieving students to attend independent sector schools (1980, ch. 20). In their evaluation of the APS, Edwards, Fitz and Whitty argue that advocates of the policy framed it as “an extension of parental choice” targeted at lower income groups, and as a means of providing “academic opportunities” to pupils for whom “local comprehensive schools were inadequate” (Edwards, Fitz, & Whitty, 1989: 1).¹⁰ This Act was also in a sense extending more diversity in educational opportunities. Researchers argue that there were essentially two strands of conservative thinking, from the *Black*

⁷ Despite the DES change in direction on comprehensivisation from the 1970 Conservative Government, and despite Thatcher’s desire to protect grammar schools, local authorities continued to submit plans to reorganise along comprehensive lines and by the end of the 1970s the majority of schools were comprehensives (Gordon et al., 1991; Simon, 1999).

⁸ The Labour Government also abolished the direct grant schools in 1975, converting them into comprehensive schools in the maintained system (Simon, 1999).

⁹ Potential conflicts included admissions agreements to aided schools, admission to selective schools by ability or where the preference would conflict with the “efficient” allocation of resources (1980, ch. 20, sect. 6).

¹⁰ They argue that the APS ended up being primarily a scholarship ladder rather than a real means of enhancing parental choice (Edwards et al., 1989; Whitty, Fitz, & Edwards, 1989).

Papers and conservative think tanks, that influenced government policy goals in these two acts: enhancing parental choice and concern over standards in comprehensive education (Johnson, 1991).

The movement towards increasing choice and diversity in this period was also a reflection of the ideological movement towards neo-liberalism, which places value on freedom of choice, the power of the individual and the role of the market (Belsey, 1986). Academics discuss the important role conservative think tanks, primarily the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), played in the development of a number of these economic ideas (Desai, 1994; Jones, 2003; Lawton, 1994; Whitty et al., 1993). In education, this meant an emphasis on the individual's decision-making powers about the education they received and on meeting the needs of the individual consumer of education (Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989). The discussion of education post-1979 also involved consideration of what means could be utilised to achieve these policy goals (see section 2.1): those that encouraged consumer demand and those that were about building supply. The next two sub-sections expand on concepts of choice and diversity; these sections provide definitions and understandings of the different concepts that are explored in the rest of the thesis.

2.2.4 Concept of Choice

Understandings of the concept of choice focus on what researchers refer to as the 'demand side' of the education market (Adler, 1997; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989; Hirsch, 1997; Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993; OECD, 1994). As discussed, this meant a focus on individual decision making, freedom of choice, and the power of the individual as a consumer. Freedom of choice as a concept contains a duality of positive freedom, freedom *to* something, and negative freedom, freedom *from* something. In the first case, parental choice can be seen as freedom from the standardisation of education; this is an example of Isaiah Berlin's negative liberty, which is about prevention of barriers to individuals exercising that freedom (Berlin, 2002). The individual is then freed to be an autonomous actor in the education market. In the case of freedom to something, this emerges in discussions of consumer rights and the right to choice about the service the users are receiving. This reflects Berlin's positive liberty, wherein parents' freedom to make their own

choices about education is facilitated or supported (Berlin, 2002). This requires encouraging competitive choice and making the system more responsive to the user. This is done through the introduction of more choice and competition, with a focus on the “consumers of education” (Ball, 1990: 8). Parents are empowered to make choices about education. In order to activate demand-led choice, the consumers must have some way to get the different providers to compete for them. As the provision of education by the state is not a true market, purchasing power of the consumer is not physical currency, rather it can be in the form of a budget allocated directly to the user or a voucher where money follows the user (Glennister, 1991, 1996; Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993; Le Grand, 1991). Authors note the importance of external interest groups, specifically the IEA, in developing the idea of vouchers from the 1950s onwards and encouraging their usage in the education sector (Johnson, 1991; Knight, 1990).

2.2.5 *Concept of Diversity*

Understandings of the concept of diversity focus on what researchers refer to as the ‘supply side’ of the education market (Adler, 1997; Hirsch, 1997; Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993; OECD, 1994). The neo-liberal focus on the individual and on ensuring that education serves individual needs underlies a focus on the supply side. Researchers note a clear emphasis on the idea of ‘differentiation’ in the education policies of the 1980s (Glatter, Woods, & Bagley, 1997; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989; Jones, 2003; Knight, 1990). Differentiation primarily meant aligning structures of education to reflect pupil variations in aptitude or ability. In this period, there were two means of increasing diversity in education discussed: between-sector and in-sector. Between-sector diversity involves introducing customer access to schools in the independent sector as well as the state sector to increase the diversity of provision available to the customer. In-sector diversity includes a range of possible variations.¹¹ For the purposes of this thesis, in-sector diversity is primarily discussed in terms of curricular focus such as subject specialisation, ability and aptitude such as in-school setting or streaming (see glossary), and in terms of management focus with variation in the funding and ownership of the school. As

¹¹ In-sector diversity can take a range of forms: structural, in terms of the governance structures within schools; funding or ownership of schools; curricular, in terms of specialism or emphasis in content in schools; style of teaching or general approach to learning; religious or philosophical emphasis of the school; market specialisation for a particular segment of the population; or simply by catering to a specific age range (Glatter et al., 1997).

with choice mechanisms discussed in section 2.2.4, these possible diversity mechanisms, both between-sector and variations on in-sector, are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.3 Aims and Purposes of Education

Another prominent area of discussion in education from 1979-1986 was regarding the aims and purposes of education. This section sets out the established historical narrative of the discussion in the 1980s as regards the aims and purposes of education with reference to the historical context and concepts that aid understanding of the policy ideas explored in the later empirical chapters.

2.3.1 Context: 1960s and Education for the Public Interest

Under the 1944 Education Act, secondary school curricula were left to the discretion of the individual schools and the local education authorities (Chitty, 2009a; McCulloch, 1994). This continued under Circular 10/65, which included only basic guidance on how to structure schools to meet the various needs of pupils and what to consider in potential curriculums; the circular did not offer detailed guidance on content (DES, 1965). The social purpose of education was a complex part of the education landscape in this period. The vision of comprehensive education as a means of achieving greater social equality and promoting mixing between social classes was a prominent issue for egalitarian theorists in the 1960s (Williams, 1961). Dale argues that the purpose of education throughout the post-war period into the 1960s was to serve the “public interest” (Dale, 1989a: 102). In the 1960s, the curriculum moved from the more “traditional liberal” model of the post-war period focused on “developing civic responsibility” to a more critical and progressive curriculum focused on “personal development” (Dale, 1989a: 105).

2.3.2 Context: 1970s and Economic Influences on the Purpose of Education

The 1973 oil crisis and the following recession ushered in a period of economic change which had implications for both industry and the education sector (Blyth, 2002; Gordon et al., 1991; Jones, 2003; Lowe, 1999). The economic crisis provided the opportunity for entrance of new economic ideas that challenged the Keynesian economic model of high government spending and full employment (Harvey, 2007).

The recession coupled with “significant structural changes” in the nature of employment opportunities (Ranson & Tomlinson, 1986: 7) contributed to high levels of youth unemployment (Jones, 2003). This led to consideration of the role education played in the economy, with industry criticising the skills of pupils leaving school (Batteson, 1997; Gordon et al., 1991; Simon, 1988). The late 1970s also represented a key turning point in the central government’s approach to the aims and purposes of education. In 1976, Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan gave a speech at Ruskin College that reflected the government’s shift in views about the aims and purposes of education. According to historians, the Ruskin College speech criticised comprehensive schools for low standards in basic skills like literacy and numeracy, and for providing a curriculum that did not address the needs of the economy or prepare pupils for the world of work (Donoughue, 1987; Glennerster, 2000; Gordon et al., 1991; McCulloch, 1986; Simon, 1988). The Ruskin Speech was followed by a series of regional conferences on education attended by Callaghan that constituted the ‘Great Debate on Education’ (Chitty, 1989b; Simon, 1999). Dale argues there was a shift in government views in the late 1970s to focusing on economic purposes of education (Dale, 1989a). He states that this shift corresponded to the use of a more vocational curriculum to serve the national interest (i.e. make the country economically competitive) to create “good workers” (Dale, 1989a: 105). Alongside this shift to focusing more on economic purposes, Bradford argues that there was also an important shift in the late 1970s towards placing “greater emphasis on how individuals gain from education” (Bradford, 1995: 1597). This shift in focus towards economic aims is also in keeping with ideas of neo-liberalism, and Bradford argues these ideas came to dominate the reforms of the 1980s (Bradford, 1995).

2.3.3 Policies and Policy Goals: 1980s Reforms and Aims of Education

During the early 1980s there were a number of publications issued by the Department of Education and Science that also explored the content of education; however, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) was the major Conservative policy initiative focused on the content of education in the early 1980s. The Prime Minister announced the TVEI in 1982 to introduce technical and vocational education into secondary schools for 14- to 18-year-olds (Gordon et al., 1991; McCulloch, 1986; Silver, 1990; Simon, 1999). It was a joint partnership with

the Department of Employment and run by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) (Simon, 1999). McCulloch argues that the TVEI programme was part of a long history of attempts to merge technical education and “liberal traditions” of secondary education (McCulloch, 1986: 43). Some academics note a concern about economic competitiveness in this period as well as an interest in technical education and measures to address youth employment emerging from Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) publications (Knight, 1990). Authors also argue that the CPS encouraged the installation in citizens of the “values embodied in the market” such as “individual initiative” and “entrepreneurism” as well as “modes of behaviour” of a “market society” such as “self-discipline” and “mutual respect” (Harris, 1996: 56).

The 1980s represented a period of examination of the aims and purposes of education. Dale’s framework, though based on changes over time, provides a useful theoretical starting point for looking at aims and purposes in education within the 1980s (Dale, 1989a). It considers education as serving both social and economic aims. In the late 1980s, Bradford argues the discussion that led up to, and culminated in, the creation of a national curriculum contained another variation on education serving the “national interest” aimed at constructing “national identity” to create “conforming citizens” (Bradford, 1995: 1597). Dale and Bradford’s models provide a useful starting point for understanding the differing social and economic aims of education. The rest of this section expands on the discussion of some of the concepts that underlie these social and economic aims; these sub-sections provide definitions and understandings of the different aspects of content that are explored in the rest of the thesis.

2.3.4 Understandings of Social Aims

One of the key stated social aims of education from the late 1970s to mid-1980s was about transmission of shared heritage and common culture. This can be understood as the development of specific values and knowledge about the common culture. One means of achieving these aims is through the use of a liberal curriculum, which historians argue was a traditionally conservative concept (McCulloch, 1986; Simon, 1999). A general liberal education is intended to expose the pupil to a broad set of “activities and aspects of knowledge and understanding”, with the intention of building their capability in a range of settings, not just the specific setting that

vocational education provides (Bailey, 1984: 15). Building from this understanding of liberal education, Watts argues that liberal education is focused on developing “the individual’s full range of abilities and aptitudes” (Watts, 1985: 9). Watts explains that liberal education is also about introducing pupils to subjects that allow “the cultivation of spiritual and moral values” and ensure “the transmission and reinterpretation of culture” (Watts, 1985: 9). Therefore, a liberal education, for the purposes of this thesis, is a curriculum that develops pupils’ abilities and also introduces them to the broad range of subjects that make up the common culture. Another important discussion in this period about social purposes of education involved the creation of future citizens. Civic education as a concept in these discussions builds on the knowledge and values provided by liberal education to articulate the “civic virtues and decent behaviour that adults wish to see in young people” (Hargreaves, 1994: 37). The transmission of the critical thinking and knowledge through liberal education combined with the civic education on behaviours helps to shape the idea of a good citizen: one who is moral, obeys the laws and exercises civic rights like voting (Crick, 2000).

2.3.5 Understandings of Economic Aims

The traditional liberal education model, in this period, was set in opposition to a more specific vocational or technical model of education focused on the needs of industry. McCulloch argues that the focus on technical education was also an old conservative tradition: “favouring technical education for the purpose of national efficiency and economic productivity” (McCulloch, 1986: 40). Cohen argues the emphasis on technical education showed a movement towards a “skills” focused curriculum intended to instil in pupils “a more mobile form of self-discipline, adapted to changing technologies of production and consumption, and to link this to a modern version of self-improvement” (Cohen, 1984: 105). A curriculum that focuses on the economic aims of preparing pupils to be good workers, therefore, emphasises the development of attitudes such as self-discipline and a focus on knowledge that makes pupils adaptable to the world of work. Jamieson talks about this as the result of the ‘schools-industry movement’ which included a range of individuals from industry and government calling for change in what was taught in education (Jamieson, 1985). He argues that the ‘schools-industry movement’ focused on ensuring three strands in education relevant to the world of work: skills,

attitudes and employment-related knowledge (Jamieson, 1985). His work provides a useful starting point for categorising the skills that employers want from education. Jamieson makes the distinction between “basic skills” and “practical skills” (Jamieson, 1985: 27). He further argues that employers were also interested in developing “practical skills” through “experienced-based learning”, which relates closely to the development of employment-related knowledge (Jamieson, 1985: 27). The aim of an economically focused education can then be thought of as the development of the pupil’s basic and practical skills to better meet the needs of industry. This understanding of an economically focused curriculum provides a useful context for discussing contrasting approaches to education from 1979 to 1986.

2.4 Management and Funding of Education

The final area of secondary education that will be explored in this thesis is control over school management and funding. This section uses a similar format to the last two in which the context of funding and management is explored, then the 1980s policy goals, and finally some of the concepts that underlie these policies and relevant definitions.

2.4.1 Context: Strong Central and Local Government Partnership

The 1944 Education Act ensured that the Ministry of Education had oversight over local authorities whilst making local authorities responsible for provision of education that met the needs of the local communities (McCulloch, 1994). Historians describe this as a period of strong partnership between the central state, local governments and the schools themselves (McCulloch, 1994; Ranson & Tomlinson, 1986; Sharp, 2002). Local education authorities were responsible for allocating funding to schools, overseeing hiring of staff, centralising services to schools, managing school admissions and selecting membership of school governing bodies. The 1944 Act also required the creation of governing bodies for schools to handle internal management of policies and resources (Sharp, 2002). Schools were primarily funded through local taxes and rates which were supplemented by a central government grant (Simon, 1999). Researchers argue that the management of secondary education created by the 1944 Act was effectively ‘a national system locally administered’ (Chitty, 2009a). As noted briefly earlier in this chapter, the

1944 Act did not specify the types of schools that should exist, rather decisions about the organisation and structure of schools were left to the discretion of local authorities (Glennerster, 2000; McCulloch, 1994, 2002). The DES introduced comprehensive education in the 1960s, which represented a stronger directive from the central government about organisation of schools by linking the approval of new capital grants for development to local authorities submitting plans to the DES for comprehensive reorganisation (DES, 1966). However, the local authorities retained management over resource allocation, staffing and curriculum in close partnership with the schools themselves.

2.4.2 Context: Accountability and Changing Ideas about Partnership

The idea of accountability has a long history in education as part of this partnership of control; however, it became the object of renewed focus in the 1970s in Prime Minister James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech (Becher, Eraut, & Knight, 1981; Ranson, 2003). The desire for more accountability expressed in the Ruskin College speech came in two forms: a desire for improving standards through increased regulation and a desire for increasing efficiency in usage of educational resources (Simon, 1999). The Ruskin College speech and the subsequent Great Debate began a discussion of how accountability operated in the existing partnership. This discussion was furthered by the release of the Taylor Committee's report on management of schools (Sharp, 2002). The 1977 Taylor Report, *A New Partnership for Our Schools*, recommended major changes to school governing bodies with the inclusion of representatives from the local education authorities, parents, staff and the local community (DES, 1977). This was a new type of partnership in terms of involvement of different interests in the management of schools (Sharp, 2002; Gordon et al., 1991); local education authorities were previously responsible for selecting the membership of governing bodies. The report's recommendations still included an important role for local authorities in the management of schools alongside headteachers and governing bodies (Gordon et al., 1991; Sharp, 2002). Historians of education describe these changes as part of the emergence of the 'consumerism' movement in the 1970s which meant an increase in focus on "participation in community affairs and demands for value for money and accountability" (Gordon et al., 1991: 98). Morris argues that this 'consumer movement', which can be seen in both Callaghan's speeches and the Taylor Report,

led to some major 1980s policy reforms and represented a “form of public mistrust of professionals, bureaucracies, large institutions and grand designs” (Morris, 1986: 42). He argues that this showed a desire from the public to “hold properly to account those responsible for deliver[y]” (Morris, 1986: 42). The 1980s policies regarding this new form of partnership are explored in the next sub-section.

2.4.3 Policies and Policy Goals: 1980s Reforms and Governing Bodies

The first Conservative reform of the management of education, the 1980 Education Act, required that the governing bodies for schools include governors from the local education authorities, parents and teachers (1980, ch. 20, sect. 2). Historians argue that the Conservative Government seemed to take on some of Taylor’s recommendations in this Act by giving weight to governing bodies and including requirements for a variety of partners (Sharp, 2002). Ranson argues that the 1980 Act’s focus on the role of parents, and the introduction of parental choice discussed previously (see section 2.2.3), tied to increasing demands from consumers for accountability (Ranson, 1988). He also notes that the Adam Smith Institute (ASI), the conservative think tank, was also arguing for increased consumer accountability in the education system (Ranson, 1988). The last government education act before the 1987 General Election was the 1986 Education (No. 2) Act, which introduced regulations on management including more equal composition of partners on governing bodies (local education authority governors, parents, staff and business and industry) and the roles of specific partners (governors, headteachers and the LEAs) (1986, ch. 61, sect. 3). Authors particularly highlight the increased responsibilities given to school governors and head teachers (Maclure, 1992). The 1986 Act was a much closer version of the equal partnership recommended by Taylor than the 1980 Act, particularly with the inclusion of a continued role for the local education authorities as intermediaries (Gordon et al., 1991; Sharp, 2002). The 1986 Act also required local authorities to provide governors financial information relating to their schools (1986, ch. 61, sect. 29). The intention was to allow “the governing body to judge whether expenditure in relation to their school represents the economic, efficient and effective use of resources” (1986, ch. 61, sect. 29a).

Authors argue that the 1980s represented a period of transition as the central government shifted which responsibilities were centralised and which were

decentralised (Kogan, Johnson, Packwood, & Whitaker, 1984; Ranson & Tomlinson, 1986; Sharp, 2002). Ball argues that the resulting partnership mix was a type of ‘fragmented centralization’ where both centralisation and decentralisation occurred (Ball, 2008). In this decentralised management structure, schools gained more autonomy from local education authorities, which allowed for their greater control over budgets and staffing. Governing bodies, and parents, emerged as more important members of the education partnership (Sharp, 2002). Another variation on the focus on accountability in education can be seen not just in management, but also in terms of concern over education financing and efficient usage of resources. This led to more centralisation of the allocation of funding by the central state and the removal of local education authority control. The next two sub-sections will explore models of accountability and efficiency that can be used to explain the changes in the 1980s.

2.4.4 Concepts of Management and Accountability

The idea of accountability is an aspect that is present in many of the discussions about partnerships (Lello, 1979). Although there are many views on the definition of accountability, the clearest is that “accountability implies having an answerable relationship” (Lello, 1979: 3). Therefore, accountability in education is about ensuring that various elements of the partnership that manage education are ‘answerable’ to each other. Becher, Eraut and Knight developed a framework for accountability that includes ‘moral’, ‘contractual’ and ‘professional’ accountability based on research conducted before Prime Minister James Callaghan’s 1976 Ruskin College speech (Becher et al., 1981). Moral accountability involves each partner being answerable to those who are affected by their actions (Becher et al., 1981); other authors refer to this as ‘responsive accountability’ or ‘answerability’ (Elliott, 1981; Kogan et al., 1984). This is the idea of being accountable downwards, where teachers should be answerable to parents or headteachers should be answerable to their staff. Contractual accountability pertains to what is legally required of employees by their employers (Becher et al., 1981). This is the idea of ‘public accountability’, being accountable ‘upwards’, such as teachers to headteachers and headteachers to governors (Elliott, 1981; Epstein, 1993). Professional accountability involves being held to account by professional peers or codes of conduct (Becher et al., 1981; West, Mattei, & Roberts, 2011). This implies another definition of

accountability as set out by Maurice Kogan, in which partners “are liable to review and the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy those with whom they are in an accountability relationship” (Kogan, 1986, p. 25). Ranson argues that it was this last category, professional accountability, which was heavily criticised in the Ruskin College speech (Ranson, 2003). He argues that the introduction of neo-liberalism in the 1980s led to the creation of a new regime of accountability which included the emergence of ‘consumer accountability’ (Ranson, 2003). This can be seen to be part of the ‘consumerism movement’ that emerged in the 1970s.

Consumer accountability, or ‘market accountability’, relates to the introduction of more individual choice into the education system, requiring greater responsiveness to parents or the users (Ball, Vincent, & Radnor, 1997; Ranson, 2003; West et al., 2011). Consumer accountability gives a stronger role for parents or the community under the new partnership model.

2.4.5 Concepts of Efficiency and Value for Money

Turning to the issue of funding, historians note that concerns were raised in the 1970s about efficient usage of resources in education (Simon, 1999). ‘Efficiency’ can be seen as a quantifiable measure of accountability (Rapple, 1992); efficiency focuses on the relationship of educational spending to the educational outputs. This is another type of consumer or market accountability, in that a focus on efficiency allows consumers to determine how well the service is being delivered. Economists talk about efficiency in general as a means “to specify the amount of education (that is, the size of the education system) that will maximise aggregate net social benefit” (Le Grand, Propper, & Robinson, 1992: 66). They note that the difficulty with education is then defining costs and benefits (Le Grand et al., 1992). The costs are easier to pinpoint in education in terms of staffing, books, etc., but benefits are harder as this relates to the concepts of the aims and purposes of education.

Efficiency of education services must therefore also account for the types of outputs that are being sought, in short the aims of education. Another term in frequent usage as regards financing of education and management of resources, is ‘value for money’. A useful definition of value for money is that it is a combination of cost-efficiency and effectiveness (the quality of meeting established goals) (Levačić, 1995). Achievement of one aspect by a programme does not ensure the other is being achieved, whereas value for money indicates that both are being achieved

(Levačić, 1995). These aspects of efficiency and cost-effectiveness are discussed further in Chapter 6.

2.5 Research on City Technology Colleges (CTCs)

While the last three sections looked at the larger ideas under discussion in secondary education in this period, this section focuses specifically on the CTC policy and the relevant research. As with the previous sections, context is provided to understand existing research that relates the CTCs to a broader Conservative approach to education policy. The section then focuses on existing research on the policy goals of the CTCs. Unlike other sections, there is a discussion that specifically focuses on existing work on the originators of the policy. Finally, this section concludes with a brief mention of some of the issues in implementation of the CTC policy and acknowledgement that some of the policy goals of CTCs changed over time.

2.5.1 Context: CTCs and the Conservative Approach to Education Policy

There are two major pieces of research on the CTC programme: the first, by Geoffrey Walford and Henry Miller in 1991, is an ethnographic study of the first CTC which includes a brief section on the national programme (Walford & Miller, 1991); the second, by Geoff Whitty, Tony Edwards and Sharon Gewirtz in 1993, relies on interviews and some documentary analysis to follow the programme as a whole from conception to implementation (Whitty et al., 1993). Both of these studies provide some information on the goals for the policy, discussed in the next sub-section, and the relationship of the policy to the larger Conservative approach to education policy. Both studies note the importance of the ‘ideological ground-clearing’ done by the authors of the *Black Papers* by opening discussion on ideas introduced in the CTC policy (Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993).

Other studies look at the broader ideological or discursive trends that influenced the creation of Conservative policy in the 1980s, either ending before discussion of the CTCs (Knight, 1990) or focusing on the larger institutional debates leading to the 1988 Education Act with passing reference to the CTCs (Ball, 1990). Dale breaks down the component elements of the CTCs and their relationship to the ‘Thatcherite’ project which primarily focuses on the implementation of the CTC policy (Dale, 1989b). The Whitty et al. study also briefly discusses how the elements

of the CTC policy fitted in with broad changes to social policy in the final Thatcher administration such as “reforms set out to undermine Keynesian welfarism”, introducing a “differentiated system of welfare provision” and placing an emphasis on “increased freedom, choice and opportunity” (Gewirtz, Whitty, & Edwards, 1992: 208). These studies indicate that the CTCs were part of a larger ideological project regarding education, and social policy more broadly, which warrants further detailed investigation.

As noted briefly in Chapter 1, researchers also place CTC reforms in the specific context of the Conservative approach to education policy leading up to the creation of the 1988 Education Reform Act (Ball, 1990; Chitty, 2009a; Gordon et al., 1991; McLeod, 1988; Simon, 1999; Tomlinson, 2005; Walford, 2000). Historian Brian Simon describes the announcement of the CTCs as the first step in a plan to “reveal the main strands of policy” that would constitute the Conservative approach to education going into the 1987 General Election (Simon, 1999: 530); John McLeod (1988) refers to the CTC policy as a ‘harbinger’ of the Conservative approach to education going into the General Election and the Education Reform Act. Historian Gary McCulloch emphasises the importance of the CTCs to “the overall thrust of government policy they came to symbolize” (2002: 46). Also as briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, studies look at the relationship of the CTCs to subsequent moves to alter the management and funding structures in the state system, such as the Academies programme, particularly through the introduction of an element of sponsorship (Ball, 2012; Chitty, 2009b; Evans, 1999; Whitty, 1990). Given that these studies note that there was a relationship between the policy and a major shift in Conservative thought about education, there is a basis for a study that provides a more detailed examination of this relationship.

2.5.2 Policy Goals: Aims of the CTC policy

The CTCs could be seen as part of a larger project in ‘Thatcherite Conservatism’ to introduce market mechanisms into social policy in general (the socio-cultural project) (Gewirtz et al., 1992; Whitty et al., 1993). Whitty et al. argue that in the Conservative vision of social policy the “welfare user” is seen as a “consumer” and state service providers should be “more responsive to consumer demand” (Whitty et al., 1993: 161). Dale (1989b) argues that this can be seen in 1980s education policy

in England, starting with the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) and continuing in the CTCs, with a shift to focus on policy goals that emphasised individualism and repositioned the parents as proxy consumers (see section 2.2.3). Researchers highlight the importance of the APS paving the way for the CTC policy by placing the emphasis in policy discussions on creating more parental choice (Dale, 1989b; Edwards, Gewirtz, & Whitty, 1992; Gewirtz, Miller, & Walford, 1991; Walford, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). Studies explore how the introduction of CTCs created a supply-side vision of education by introducing more diversity in the types of schools available in the state sector (Ball, 2012; Bradford, 1995; Bradley, Johnes, & Millington, 2001; Walford, 2000, 2014). Walford (1991) argues that the APS and the CTC policies were intended to facilitate competition in order to raise standards. Studies note that these policies particularly focused on competition between comprehensive schools, as policymakers argued standards had dropped (Abbott, 1993; Walford & Miller, 1991). Researchers argue that there was a clear policy goal aimed specifically at improving opportunities and choice in the inner cities (Edwards et al., 1992; Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 2000). Some academics also highlight an element of consistency between the policy aims of the APS and the CTCs in focusing on improving choice and opportunities for those in urban environments (Edwards et al., 1992).

Whitty et al. also place the CTCs in the economic policy stream of ‘Thatcherite Conservatism’ with a focus on developing education to shape the labour force and meet the needs of industry (Gewirtz et al., 1992; Whitty et al., 1993). Other studies place the CTCs in the larger history of technical education by drawing parallels to the technical schools of the tripartite era (Birley, 1995; McCulloch, 1989a, 1989b). Academics argue that the CTCs were an attempt to address the lack of outright success in establishing technical schools (Birley, 1995; Edwards et al., 1992; McCulloch, 1989a) and “to make science and technology more accessible” (Birley, 1995: 155). Studies also note that the CTCs seemed to expand on the ideas and policy goals of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (see section 2.3.3) (Edwards et al., 1992; Andrew Pollard, Purvis, & Walford, 1988; Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993); some even argue that the TVEI “was the CTC concept in embryonic form” (Chitty, 1989a: 38). The CTCs are seen by some as an attempt to address issues in the country’s economic competitiveness by

“providing the skills and attitudes required by an advanced industrial economy” (Edwards et al., 1992: 83). The CTCs were, according to Whitty et al., an attempt to instil in pupils the values of a ‘market system’ such as “family responsibility and self-reliance” in order to develop pupils into “individuals competing against other individuals in order to maximise their own interests” (Whitty et al., 1993: 11). Alongside the economic focus (see section 2.3.5), authors argue that the CTCs also reflected a more social aim (see section 2.3.4) for education with “a return to more traditional values in schooling” (Birley, 1995: 155). Some researchers note that the CTCs reflected conservative concerns about local authorities “promoting the ‘wrong’ values in schools” (Whitty et al., 1993: 11).

Authors also discuss the emphasis on self-management as a key policy goal in the CTCs. They argue that the appeal of the CTCs for policymakers was their independence and self-management (Edwards et al., 1992). Walford and Miller state that the CTCs were intended as “an attack on local education authorities” (Walford & Miller, 1991: vii) with a particular aim to “‘break the grip’ of left wing education authorities” (Walford & Miller, 1991: 1). In particular, Dale (1989b) argues that professionalism was a key theme of the Ruskin speech and the CTCs were an attack on that. He argues that the CTCs effectively removed the role of professional educators in the local education authorities by the CTC managers having a more direct role than a typical board of governors, with control over employing teachers, and a strong role for the CTC Trust in lieu of a local authority (Dale, 1989b). Authors also state that one of the aims of the CTCs was to bring industry into the management of schools, through involvement in governing bodies and in hiring of staff (McLeod, 1988). Walford states that the CTCs also aimed to increase industry involvement (see section 2.4.3) through ‘sponsorship’ and ‘funding’ of the schools (Walford, 2000: 146). Academics indicate that there may have been links between suggestions in the general policy discussion about having state funded schools outside local authority control, or run by individual trusts, and the resulting control structures of the CTCs (Edwards et al., 1992).

2.5.3 *Originators of the Policy Goals and Ideas*

The last sub-section explored the existing research and historical accounts about the intended policy goals of the CTCs. This sub-section considers where the existing research literature says these ideas came from. This is most easily structured into organisations (primarily think tanks and interest groups), international models and individual actors with their specific agendas.

There were a variety of potential influences on the creation of the CTC policy from interest groups external to the government (Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 2000; Whitty et al., 1993). As Walford notes, the policy goals mentioned in the last section were “not developed in an ideological vacuum, but in a context where a multitude of pressure groups and social, cultural and economic influences jostled for attention” (Walford, 2000: 150). Walford and Miller highlight the possible influence from authors at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) calling for more diversity in types of schools available in the state sector in the mid-1980s (Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 2000, 2014). Whitty et al. also highlight the potential of multiple influences from interest groups: the CPS’s technical school proposals, concern from British industry emphasised by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), and the long history of the IEA advocating for the introduction of market mechanisms into education (Whitty et al., 1993). The CPS also held a conference on employment in 1986 which was attended by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and focused on issues such as youth unemployment leading to the call for more technical education (Whitty et al., 1993). Walford and Miller argue that it was difficult to determine amongst “the large number of different voices calling for change... which had the greatest influence” (Walford & Miller, 1991: 7). Whilst it may not be possible to determine the degree of ‘formal influence’ definitively (see section 2.1), there is a need for research focusing in more detail on these different external interest groups and their relationship to the CTC policy.

Many researchers consider whether policymakers in this period engaged in policy borrowing from other countries in the creation of the policy (Edwards et al., 1992;

Smith & Exley, 2006; Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993).¹² They note the similarity between the CTCs and international examples of secondary schools, particularly magnet schools in the USA and the Realschule in Germany (which were similar to English technical) (Whitty et al., 1993; Walford and Miller, 1991). However, researchers found no evidence to indicate that policy transfer had occurred from the USA, rather that policymakers used international examples to legitimise the CTC policy (Whitty et al., 1993; Smith and Exley, 2006). Bennett's argument against making assumptions about policy borrowing fits well in this case: "There is a problem with inferring from second-hand accounts of meetings between top policymakers that one state is emulating another" (Bennett, 1991: 222). However, authors also note that think tanks of the era did reference overseas examples (Walford, 2000; Smith & Exley, 2006).

Researchers also note the importance of a number of actors from various interest groups and their particular interests that may have influenced the direction of the CTC policy. Researchers mention Caroline Cox (chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group - CPSESG) and Cyril Taylor (CPS Director, organiser of the 1986 conference on employment and later head of the CTC Trust) at the CPS as having a potential influence on the development of policy ideas that went into the CTC policy (Walford and Miller, 1991; Walford, 2000, 2014). Researchers note Cox in particular for her advocacy of a type of magnet school in 1985 (Walford & Miller, 1991) and Taylor for his advocacy of technical schools following the CPS employment conference in 1986 (Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). Authors also highlight the potential influence of Fred Naylor (member of the CPSESG) who advocated for more technical schools in a 1985 publication for the CPS (Whitty et al., 1993). Studies also list Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker (1986–1989) and Under-Secretary of State for Education Bob Dunn (1983–1988) as key actors involved in the creation of the CTC policy within the Department of Education and Science (Simon, 1999; Walford, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). Authors name Brian Griffiths (Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, 1985–1990), and other members of the Number 10 Policy Unit, as additional possible

¹² The CTCs seemed to reflect similar movements in education policy reform in New Zealand, the USA, Canada and Australia regarding "parental choice, budgetary devolution to schools, increased attention to the school curriculum, assessment and accountability and the growing emphasis on performance indicators" (Smith & Exley, 2006: 576).

internal government actors who may have influenced the direction of the policy (Chitty, 1989a; Whitty et al., 1993). Stuart Sexton (policy adviser for Secretaries of State Mark Carlisle and Keith Joseph, 1979–1986) is noted as a potentially important actor for his early work with Dunn on a proposal for a similar type of school to the CTCs as well as for his general interest, in his contributions to the *Black Papers*, in giving schools more autonomy (Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 2014; Whitty et al., 1993). Similarly to Sexton, Under-Secretary of State for Education Rhodes Boyson's (1979–1983) influence on the initial origins of the CTCs is also noted by authors, owing to his work on the *Black Papers* and his interest in 'specialist schools' during his time at the DES (Whitty et al., 1993). As with the interest groups, authors argue that it is difficult to specifically pinpoint which elements of the CTC policy were introduced by different actors according to their individual agendas (Edwards et al., 1992; Gewirtz et al., 1992; Whitty et al., 1993; Walford, 2000). It is therefore important to try to investigate further the agendas of these different actors to understand in more detail their potential influences.

2.5.4 *Implementation Issues*

The implementation of the CTC policy is one of the areas mostly extensively covered in the existing literature. In general, the research on implementation shows that the original aims of the policy shifted owing to the reality of obtaining support for the initiative: more emphasis on public rather than private funding (Edwards et al., 1992: 85) and a movement away from building new facilities to taking over existing sites (Whitty et al., 1993). Studies also look at the implementation in terms of the decision making processes that went into sponsors supporting CTCs (Birley, 1995; Margrave, 1994; Walford & Miller, 1991) and parents selecting the schools (Edwards & Whitty, 1997; Gewirtz et al., 1991; Walford, 1991). There were also a series of publications from both academics and the Association for Metropolitan Authorities at the time that were critical of the introduction of the policy and the extent to which it would affect the communities it was intended to serve (AMA, 1987; Chitty, 1989a; McLeod, 1988; Regan, 1990).

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the existing literature on background ideas which underpin the CTC policy and the existing literature on the creation of the CTCs. The majority of this chapter focused on understanding how authors discuss policy ideas in three key areas of secondary education: choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education, and management and funding. The purpose of this chapter was to establish the existing historical narrative set out by other as well as to understand and define the relevant concepts explored throughout the thesis. This chapter also looked at the existing literature on City Technology Colleges (CTCs) to establish the existing narrative about policy ideas and contributors to the policy. The review of this literature showed the gaps in the historical narrative and the areas that needed further research that this thesis seeks to explore. Three key areas emerge in this chapter: the influence of interest groups external to government on the development of education policy in the 1980s, the relationship of the broader policy discussions in secondary education to the development of the different policy ideas in the CTCs, and the complexity of possible influences on the creation of the CTC policy.

In each of the policy areas explored, authors indicated that there was a possible influence on internal government policy discussion from various interest groups outside of government. The existing literature highlights the possible influence of the *Black Papers* on discussion of parental choice and concern over standards, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) on discussions of the voucher, and the role of the IEA and Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in developing neo-liberal ideas about the role of the market (see sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4). Authors also discuss the possible role of the CPS in exploring ideas of technical education and ways of introducing the values of the market into the content of education (see section 2.3.3). Finally, the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) is also mentioned as contributing to the discussion about management and funding in terms of consumer accountability (see section 2.4.3). This thesis seeks to further explore these possible relationships in the areas of choice and diversity, aims and purposes of education, and funding and management to enhance the existing knowledge through research question 1:

- How did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science?

The concepts discussed in this chapter help to highlight and define the nuances in the discussions of policy ideas in each of these areas. This helps to provide clearer understanding of the relationship between the external and internal discussion.

Studies indicate that there were a variety of potential actors, both external to government and internally, that could have influenced the ideas that fed into the development of the CTC policy (see section 2.5.3). Authors have also indicated that it would be very difficult to determine which specific policy elements came from which actor. Therefore, there is a need for further research that outlines in greater detail the different policy agendas of these actors which is what research question 2 addresses:

- What were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas?

The existing literature highlights a relationship between the policy goals of the CTCs and a larger conservative project to introduce market mechanisms into education, to address economic needs through the content of education, and to devolve funding and management directly to schools (see section 2.5.2). It is therefore worth considering in more detail how the policy ideas that underlay the CTCs relate to these earlier discussions both internally and externally, which is what research question 3 intends to add to the existing narrative:

- How were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy?

The next chapter explains the methodology that was used in this thesis to answer these research questions.

3. Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this thesis, including research rationale, data collection, analysis and study limitations. The first section explores the overall approach taken to answering my research questions and the benefits of the methods employed. The second section outlines the rationale for my data selection, specifically why I focused on certain organisations and actors (both outside and inside government). The third section explains in detail the processes of data collection and analysis I undertook. The fourth and final section considers the challenges and limitations of my study, including issues relating to survival, access, memory, bias, reflexivity and ethics.

3.1 Research Approach

This work seeks to answer three research questions derived from gaps in the existing research or areas for future research as discussed at the end of Chapter 2. Question 1: How did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science? Question 1 is addressed by looking at multiple documents and interviews to show where ideas were developed (outside and inside government) and the movement between external discussions and internal discussions.

Question 2: What were the roles of key actors and their agendas? Question 2 is addressed by looking at multiple documents and interviews as well as triangulating with secondary sources to understand recorded accounts of actor involvement in the policies and to understand their policy priorities.

Question 3: How were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the City Technology College (CTC) policy? Question 3 is addressed across time and relies on historical methods to show the development of different ideas and the relationships of these ideas to the CTCs.

The structure of this thesis reflects these three questions; each of the first three empirical chapters is divided into external and internal discussions to show the

development of ideas within each of these areas and the interplay of different agendas. This structure also makes it possible to show the movement of ideas on each major theme between the external and internal discussion. The first three empirical chapters each focus on one major theme: choice and diversity (Chapter 4), aims and purposes of education (Chapter 5) and funding and management (Chapter 6). Chapter 5 also focuses on key actors and their agendas regarding technical education; Chapter 7 specifically focuses on the role and agenda of key actors regarding the creation of the CTC policy. This makes it possible to see the development of policy priorities in the broader thematic areas and then how those priorities come into play in the specific discussion of the CTC policy. The strands of discussions of ideas and policies are brought together in the final empirical chapter (Chapter 7) to understand their relationship with the resulting CTC policy.

3.1.1 Stages of Data Collection

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted multiple phases of data collection. Periods of data collection were followed by analysis which were in turn followed by additional stages of data collection and analysis. Only by constantly reflecting on and narrowing my scope was I able to navigate the vast expanse of potential historical data sources available on conservative thought and practice concerning education policy from 1979 to 1986. There were three major phases to this study: preliminary data collection (initial document analysis to establish the parameters of my research including using secondary sources to establish the existing historical narrative and primary sources, government and external interest group publications), main data collection (three rounds of archival research with an additional stage of collection of government and external interest group publications), and supplementary data collection (elite interviews). The details of the process of collection and analysis of the archival and published historical documents used in this research are explained in section 3.3.

The preliminary data collection involved examination of secondary source material and other academic accounts of this period to get a 'feel' for the area (Purvis, 1985). This allowed me to understand established themes and narratives about the development of the CTC policy. This was followed by a broad gathering and exploration of materials identified in these narratives: government documents,

external interest group publications, and memoirs from key actors. This phase helped to determine which organisations and actors to focus on in the research; this was also supplemented by a preliminary key informant interview (Cyril Taylor). Actors and organisations were identified through the existing literature; the specific rationale for their selection is explained in section 3.2.

The main data collection involved the compilation of a list of archives and holdings that covered the period 1979–1986 (from the start of Margaret Thatcher’s first term as Prime Minister to the announcement of the CTC programme). I took a broad approach to data collection, looking for all discussions of secondary education (and education more broadly) by the key actors and organisations in this period.

I then reviewed the documents, looking for emerging themes, and began to construct a ‘thematic codebook’ where I recorded examples of the major themes and sub-themes from the documents (the details of the analysis are explained in section 3.3.4). Alongside the archival data collection, as new relevant organisations or actors emerged, I broadened the scope of documents for analysis. For example, as I learned more about the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) I expanded my search to include more of their pamphlets on education from the Education Study Group.

The final phase involved collection of specific data to fill in gaps from the main round of data collection that were identified in preliminary analysis. This involved a final round of archival data collection to fill gaps in the data on particular organisations or actors. At the very end of the process, I conducted three semi-structured interviews with key actors (Kenneth Baker, Stuart Sexton and Brian Griffiths) to supplement the document examination. The interview questions were driven by, and built on, my previous document analysis. The interviews were semi-structured to allow greater flexibility in interviewee responses, but also to ensure that key themes were covered (see appendix for interview schedule and list of individuals contacted). This mixed method approach, combining interview techniques with document analysis, or ‘methodological eclecticism’, is common in education policy (Finch, 1985). As Walford (1987) argues, “academic subject areas are not static monolithic entities, but shifting amalgams of sub-groups and

traditions” (Walford, 1987: 1); nowhere is this truer than in the study of social policy generally and education policy specifically.

3.1.2 Usage of Historical Methods

As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, using historical methods to research education policy is significant in that it provides understanding of the context of the creation of policy which also allows learning about aspects of past policies that could be relevant to the modern context.

First, to understand the relevance of the past to the present it is important to understand the broader context of past events. This draws on Carr’s approach to history, in which history is treated as more than a ‘chronicling’ of facts and acts, but rather an attempt to place events in larger contexts (Carr, 1964). This means understanding the larger forces that shape policies such as the economic, social, political or ideological factors. Historical research applies a modern lens to define, categorise and explain these larger influences on events of the past, in order to try to make sense of what occurred (Carr, 1964; Evans, 2004). Carr suggests that history is an unending dialogue between the past and the present (Carr, 1964; Evans, 2004).

Second, historical research is a way of understanding modern issues and policies in order to seek solutions based on past experience (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000). Historical research on policymaking provides context to policies, which allows learning from the past: “insights from the past enable us to ask questions about the present” (Saran, 1985: 209). It allows the historian to understand the intentions of education policymakers at a given time and how they viewed education, which then can help explain similar intentions in the present. Those that study the history of education, Aldrich (2003) argues, have a dual duty to history (to the past) and to education (to the present), but the result is the same, to “research, record and interpret past events as fully and as accurately as possible” (Aldrich, 2003: 135). This then leads to discussion between the role of the historian of education and the educationalist:

There has been an uneasy tension between those – usually academic historians – who have espoused a liberal arts view of the value of educational history for its own sake and others – educationalists, in the main – who have wanted to see historical studies in education put to use in addressing

contemporary problems and controversies. (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000: 27)

The historical study of education policy, therefore, goes beyond understanding the relationship of events to larger contexts, but can also lead to learning from past responses to those economic, social and political factors that may mirror the present context.

Third, looking backward enhances the understanding of the origins of policies that were taken for granted at the time they were developed (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000). Policymaking can often be viewed as a ‘blackbox’ and there are a number of barriers to contemporaneous policymaking studies, which may not restrict the historian studying policymaking: “limited access to key private documents make it very difficult when doing contemporary policy research to discover what actually went on behind the policy-making scenes” (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994: 199). Studying the creation of policy in the past allows for historical distance; as time passes issues may be less contentious and it allows us to look at them in more detail in order to see narratives that may not have been as clear contemporaneous to the events (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994).

3.2 Rationale for Data Selection

My study focused only on ideologically right leaning organisations and actors. As such I used data from four groups: think tanks, pressure groups, expert groups and policymakers.¹³ These were selected based on their relevance as emerging from the secondary literature: “the range of material which historical researchers have to handle means that some kind of sampling, whether deliberate or otherwise is inevitable” (Andrew, 1985: 159). The sections that follow outline the rationale for the focus on specific organisations and individuals in each of these areas. The intention of this study is to establish where the creation of politically right leaning ideas about education came from and to understand how the transference of those ideas happened from external interest groups into government policy.

¹³ Policymakers include politicians, civil servants and policy advisers. The other groups are defined as: think tanks (which are research based and theoretically apolitical), pressure groups (with specific advocacy agendas) and experts (either associated with think tanks or independent). The final category is defined as groups of experts that publish together but are not a formal organisation, such as the authors of the *Black Papers*.

3.2.1 Think Tanks

Many think tanks from the early 1970s through to the late 1980s are described in literature as having had an important role in articulating Thatcherism and influencing the direction of Conservative education policy (Desai, 1994). The think tanks were essential to giving ‘intellectuals’ the opportunity to shape the ideological environment by giving them both access to policymakers and a public platform (Quicke, 1988). There was an important advocacy role for these think tanks in this period, particularly in terms of defining the economic ideas. Harrison (1994) talks about this shift as involving the rise of ‘advocacy oriented groups’, like the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and Centre for Policy Studies (CPS). The IEA and the CPS are particularly noted for their influence on conservative thought on policy as “they provided the ideas which gave intellectual shape to the instincts and energy of Thatcherism” (James, 1993: 496). In addition, other think tanks such as the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) which branched off from the IEA in 1980 and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) also played a key part in the promotion and creation of conservative ideas about policy (Denham & Garnett, 1998).

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)

The IEA was founded in 1955 and played a key role in the transmission of the economic ideas of neo-liberalism, focusing on the free market and monetarist economics (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 1998; Evans, 1999; Muller, 1996). The first Director of the IEA was Ralph Harris; Arthur Seldon was appointed as his partner and Editorial Advisor to manage the publication programme in 1958 (Seldon would later take over as Director) (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 2004; Muller, 1996). Seldon and Harris maintained a close relationship with Keith Joseph (Conservative politician and later Secretary of State for Education) throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and the IEA was a major influence on both his and Margaret Thatcher’s thinking about the economics of the free market (Blake, 1985; Evans, 1999; Halcrow, 1989; Young, 1990). The primary influence of the IEA was as the “conduit and popularizer of neo-liberal economic ideas” (Desai, 1994: 29), but more “as a source of spiritual opposition than of constructive policy ideas” (Denham & Garnett, 1998: 111). The influence of the IEA on thinking about the “market, competition, entrepreneurship and individual choice” (Desai, 1994: 46) on education has particular relevance to this thesis.

Social Affairs Unit (SAU)

The SAU was established in 1980 by Dr Digby Anderson, a sociology lecturer, with the encouragement of Arthur Seldon, as the latter “realised that many of the economic arguments deployed by the IEA were being intellectually attacked not only by Keynesian economists but also by sociologists” (Muller, 1996: 102). The intention was to break out into other policy areas beyond the economics of the IEA and to provide an alternative to the ‘collectivism’ of social policy areas like education (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 1998; Muller, 1996). In terms of SAU membership influence on education policy, there was extensive crossover with conservative education activists who worked with the CPS (see below) and later the Hillgate Group (see section 3.2.2) such as Caroline Cox, John Marks and Antony Flew; Digby Anderson himself would also contribute to education publications for the CPS during the early 1980s. Unlike the IEA and the CPS, the direct relationship of the SAU to actors inside government was unclear, but it was “an important voice in the 1980s calling for re-examination of numerous post-war orthodoxies on a number of social policy issues” (Cockett, 1995: 280).

Centre for Policy Studies (CPS)

The CPS was founded in 1974 by Margaret Thatcher, Keith Joseph and Alfred Sherman to explore new neo-liberal ideas and a new Conservative approach to policy (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 1998; Desai, 1994; Halcrow, 1989; Young, 1990). The CPS built off of a series of speeches by Joseph challenging the then-dominant Keynesian economic theory (Desai, 1994; Evans, 1999; Halcrow, 1989; Harris, 1996). The CPS built on the work of other organisations like the IEA in promoting neo-liberal economic ideas (Cockett, 1995), and creating policy proposals specifically for the purposes of it becoming Conservative Party, and hopefully, government policy (Denham & Garnett, 1998; Desai, 1994; Muller, 1996). The CPS had a close relationship with the leadership of the Conservative Party during the latter’s time in opposition before 1979 and in Thatcher’s administration from 1979 onwards (Ranelagh, 1991). When Joseph became Secretary of State for Education in 1981 he had an active relationship with the CPS. Joseph highlighted the issue of the gap in technical education between Britain and the rest of Europe by requiring DES staff to read Max Wilkinson’s *Lessons from*

Europe written for the CPS (Halcrow, 1989; Harrison, 1994). After 1983, the advocacy side of the CPS was reduced and primary focus was given to research through the work of study groups (Desai, 1994); this also corresponded with the departure of Sherman from the organisation and a significant change in the CPS leadership with Elizabeth Cottrell as Director of Research and Hugh Thomas as chair (Cockett, 1995; Desai, 1994). As Harris (1996) notes, one of the areas on which the CPS was ‘prolific’ in producing research was on education; this was largely owing to the work of its Education Study Group (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 1998).

Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG)

The CPSESG membership had extensive crossover with other think tanks and pressure groups throughout the 1980s, including chairman Caroline Cox and secretary John Marks, both also of SAU (Cockett, 1995; Knight, 1990). Other members of the group included academics, teachers and members of other conservative interest groups. Frequent contributors to publications included: Dr Digby Anderson (of the SAU), Elizabeth Cottrell (the head of research for the CPS), Majorie Seldon (wife of Arthur Seldon at the IEA and founder of the pressure group Friends of the Education Voucher in Representative Regions (FEVER) where she worked with Conservative politician, and later Under-Secretary of State, Rhodes Boyson), Fred Naylor (*Black Paper* contributor and later research fellow for the CPS), Professor R.V. Jones (who collaborated with Naylor on a technical schools publication) Laurence Norcross (contributor to SAU publications), and Professor Antony Flew (contributor to SAU publications) (Knight, 1990).¹⁴ The CPSESG produced many publications on education throughout the 1980s, with the most prominent being *The Right to Learn* in 1982, which was pitched as a guide for the conservative vision of education in the 1980s (Cox & Marks, 1982b; Knight, 1990).

Adam Smith Institute (ASI)

The ASI was founded in 1977 by Madsen Pirie and Eammon Butler, president and director respectively (Denham & Garnett, 1998). The ASI’s focus was similar to the IEA, to “promote free market ideology” (Denham & Garnett, 1998: 152), and also

¹⁴ Other group members included Professor Stanislav Andreski, Desmond Fitzgerald, Alan Grant, Wilson Longden, and Patricia Morgan.

similar to the CPS in its aim of policy planning for the Conservative Party, but unlike other think tanks, the ASI's key focus was on policy implementation (Cockett, 1995; Denham & Garnett, 1998). The 'OMEGA' project (1982–85) detailed a systematic blueprint for policy with whole plans for implementation, making it "the most ambitious attempt to date to spell out the implications of neo-liberalism for social policy" (Levitas, 1986: 82). The ASI described the approach and purpose of this project: "The Omega Project was designed to create and develop new policy initiatives, to research and analyze these new ideas, and to bring them forward for public discussion" (Adam Smith Institute, 1984: iii). The ASI created twenty working parties on different policy areas and *Omega File: Education Policy* received contributions from: Digby Anderson (SAU), Caroline Cox (CPSESG), Antony Flew (CPSESG), David Marsland, Lawrence Norcross (CPSESG) and James Pawsey (Adam Smith Institute, 1984).

3.2.2 *Pressure Groups*

The interest groups beyond the think tanks were a mix of the more traditional employment-related pressure groups as well as newer ideological pressure groups focused primarily on advocacy. Traditional pressure groups like the Confederation for British Industry (CBI) maintained an important function throughout this period in highlighting the needs of industry (Desai, 1994), particularly as regards the training of young people coming into the workforce (Whitty et al., 1993). The role of the CBI in highlighting the gaps in technical education is, for example, described as being important to the early discussions on the need for technology education that influenced the development of the CTC programme (Whitty et al., 1993). Alongside the CBI, the Hillgate Group was also a prominent pressure group that influenced conservative discussion on education in this period. The Hillgate Group was a notable later addition to the debate on education which published a 'manifesto' on education in December 1986 ahead of the 1987 General Election. The membership of the group again indicates a great deal of crossover regarding conservative education between the various organisations discussed in this chapter: Caroline Cox, Jessica Douglas-Home, John Marks, Lawrence Norcross and Roger Scruton.

3.2.3 *Groups of Experts – Black Papers*

While not a coherent interest group, the authors who contributed to the publication of the *Black Papers* could be seen as a group of experts. The *Black Papers* were a major influence on the emergence of debates around conservative thought on education in the 1960s and 1970s (see section 2.2.2), and the contributors would go on to be members of many of the central think tanks and pressure groups (Ball, 1990; Chitty, 2009a; Knight, 1990; Simon, 1999). This once again underscores the complexity and interrelated nature of many of these groups and actors in this period. There were five publications in total that spanned the late 1960s into the late 1970s and constituted the *Black Papers: The Fight for Education: A Black Paper* in 1969, *Black Paper Two: The Crisis in Education* in 1969, *Black Paper Three: Goodbye Mr. Short* in 1970, *Black Paper 1975: The Fight for Education*, and *Black Paper 1977*. In his memoir, *Black Paper* editor Brian Cox stated that he launched a kind of campaign after the second *Black Paper* starting in the 1970s, which included the creation of manifestos, the organisation of regular events and a series of regular media appearances in order to raise the profile of the publications (Cox, 1992). The *Black Papers* provided the basis for a conservative vision for education that would be later developed, enhanced and augmented by interest groups and actors throughout the period of focus of this research.

3.2.4 *Policymakers*

Examination of this group was essential to outlining how ideas about education were represented and what ideas resulted in Conservative Government policy.

Policymakers researched in this thesis include elected government officials, civil servants and policy advisers. Looking at the motivations of policymakers provides a way of understanding the development of ideas from 1979–1986 and the aspects that may have been missed in the existing narratives of the CTCs. I look at the influence of ideas on policymakers by exploring the internal government discussion they had, showing which ideas were promoted and in what sequence. This shows how ideas evolved, what motivated key actors, and which ideas were eventually included in government policy in this period. The sub-sections that follow explain the rationale for looking at specific actors in government more broadly (the Prime Minister and members of the No. 10 Policy Unit) and those in the Department of Education and

Science (DES), drawing on the secondary literature and memoirs of actors not central to this analysis.

Prime Minister and Number 10 Policy Unit

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990) is often described in literature as playing a key role in shaping a new vision for Conservative Party social policy in the 1980s (Blake, 1985; Evans, 1999; Harrison, 1994; Young, 1990). This shift in policy for the Conservatives relied on theoretical backing from various interest groups (Young, 1990). Some authors argue that the ability of the Thatcher administration to break with established post-war policy owes much to this ‘intellectual revolution’ amongst interest groups and Thatcher’s relationship with particular intellectuals (Blake, 1985); she benefited from a “swing [in intellectual opinion] to the right” (Harrison, 1994: 213). In terms of specific ‘intellectual’ influence from interest groups, Thatcher was a founder of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and an advocate of the economic theory of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) (Desai, 1994) (see section 3.2.1).

Thatcher’s direct influence over education policy was complex; the secondary literature has shown that certainly there was a role for her policy unit in terms of providing advice and consent to secretaries of state for education (Evans, 1999; Whitty, Edwards, & Gewirtz, 1993). Her time as Secretary of State for Education (1970–1974) is also known to have influenced her thinking on education policy. Thatcher had a number of key issues on her agenda as Secretary of State, but most importantly she wanted “to liberate local authorities from any compulsion to make them [comprehensive schools] supersede the grammar schools” (Young, 1990: 68). Knight argues that she was in correspondence with the *Black Paper* authors during this time, in particular Brian Cox and Tony Dyson, which influenced the content of her speeches as education secretary (Knight, 1990). One of her first acts as Secretary of State was to issue Circular 10/70, which eliminated the compulsion for local authorities to reorganise along comprehensive lines (see section 2.2.2), but many continued to submit proposals which meant that Thatcher approved the reorganisation of many grammar schools into comprehensives (Gordon et al., 1991; Simon, 1999). Authors also argue that Thatcher had a difficult relationship with DES staff, and the civil service more broadly, during this time (Lawrence, 1992);

this influenced her attitudes toward both the department and the role of the civil service in making policy.

Partially as a consequence of her difficult relationship with the civil service during her time as Secretary of State, Thatcher was selective about her policy advisers (Kavanagh, 1990). She relied heavily on the Number 10 Policy Unit (Ranelagh, 1991), which “was set up to be and remained an important entree, a ‘grand suggestions box’¹⁵ for pushing neo-liberal theories and policy proposals into an otherwise indifferent Whitehall” (Desai, 1994: 32). The first head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, John Hoskyns (1979–1982), shaped the first Thatcher administration’s policy, and he was recruited for the position as a result of his work with the CPS (Harris, 1996). The three following heads of the unit were: Ferdinand Mount (1982–83), John Redwood (1983–1985) and Brian Griffiths (1985–1990). Ranelagh describes the three later heads as belonging to the “second wave” of Thatcherism, “translating principles that had already been devised into policies” (Ranson, 2003: 243–4). All four heads of the policy unit had connections to the CPS. John Hoskyns and John Redwood both authored publications for the CPS prior to entering the Thatcher administration (Denham & Garnett, 1998); authors argue that it was John Redwood’s work on privatisation with the CPS that led to his appointment (Harris, 1996). Ferdinand Mount was Director of the CPS before his appointment to lead the unit (Harris, 1996). Brian Griffiths joined the CPS board of directors after his time as head of the unit (Denham & Garnett, 1998); he also had connections to other think tanks in that he was an author for the IEA. As noted in section 2.5.3, the Number 10 Policy Unit and Brian Griffiths were seen as influences on the creation of the CTCs (Chitty, 1989a; Whitty et al., 1993).

Department of Education and Science and the Secretaries of State for Education

Prior to the 1980s, according to historians, the role of Secretary of State for Education was not considered very prestigious or one in which there was much scope for activist policymaking (Batteson, 1997). The position was held by politicians serving “cabinet apprenticeships”, “low-status and lack-lustre appointees”, and token women in the Cabinet, and it was seen as a “temporary rest

¹⁵ The phrase originates from the former Director of Studies for the CPS, David Willetts who in 1987 described the role of the policy unit as a “grand suggestions box” (Willetts, 1987: 452).

home for failing starts” (Batteson, 1997: 363). This shifted in 1981 to a more activist position for policymakers trying to make their mark with the installation of Keith Joseph as Secretary of State (Batteson, 1997: 363). Batteson (1997) argues that education (as a department and policy area) was not perceived to be a priority by successive secretaries of state, until the Great Debate launched by James Callaghan in 1976 (see section 2.3.2). The Great Debate brought education to the centre of the agenda and raised the profile of the DES (Batteson, 1997).

Mark Carlisle was the first Secretary of State for Education and Science under Thatcher from 1979–1981, and despite being the last of what Batteson (1997) describes as placeholder ministers, he moved Conservative education policy forward at the national level with the attempts to introduce increased parental choice and the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) (see section 4.2.4.). Carlisle was considered part of the traditional ‘one nation’ strand of the Conservative Party (Blake, 1985; Lawton, 1994). He did not have direct relationships to think tanks or pressure groups, nor did his Minister of State – Baroness Janet Young (1979–1981), but both were responsible for setting the education agenda for the first Thatcher administration (Knight, 1990). Under-Secretary of State for Science and Education, Rhodes Boyson (1979–1983), was an ‘active advocate’ for education reform as an editor and author of some of the *Black Papers*, and he had a clear agenda for Conservative education which included “choice in education”, “preservation of grammar schools” and improving “low standards of discipline and academic work” (Lawton, 1994: 49). He was also an advocate of educational vouchers and highly critical of the comprehensive education system (Halcrow, 1989; Knight, 1990; Simon, 1999). Alongside Rhodes Boyson, DES policy adviser¹⁶ Stuart Sexton was another *Black Paper* contributor and supporter of both parental choice and the vouchers (Halcrow, 1989). He was education policy adviser to the Conservative Party from 1975–1979 (Lawton, 1994) and then DES policy adviser under both Mark Carlisle and Keith Joseph (1979–1986) (Knight, 1990). Stuart Sexton was a key architect of the APS (Knight, 1990) and went on to contribute to the work of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), founding its Education Unit in 1986.¹⁷

¹⁶ Policy or political advisers were non—civil service appointees.

¹⁷ Though funded separately, the Education Unit expanded out the IEA’s influence into social policy and produced a number of publications in the late 1980s about the direction of education policy, including *Our Schools: A Radical Policy*, which advocated for the greater marketization of education.

Keith Joseph was an entirely different figure to Mark Carlisle and heavily involved in shaping the Thatcherite interpretation of the new conservatism. He was seen as “the principal ‘gatekeeper’ of Thatcherism in the 1970s” (Ranelagh, 1991: 10). Joseph was Secretary of State for Education from 1981–86, and as noted earlier, was a co-founder of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS). He was a strong advocate for education vouchers (Gordon et al., 1991; Halcrow, 1989; Harrison, 1994; Simon, 1999) and the introduction of market principles into the welfare state as advocated by the IEA (Blake, 1985; Desai, 1994; Evans, 1999). He wanted to move away from the comprehensive system and introduce more technical and vocational education in schools (Knight, 1990; Lawton, 1994). Joseph was also joined by Bob Dunn as Under-Secretary of State from 1983–1987 (Knight, 1990; Simon, 1999). He was also a close collaborator with Sexton on the development of policy (Knight, 1990; Whitty et al., 1993). In Whitty et al. (1993)’s examination of the possible influences on the creation of the CTCs, they note that Dunn pushed for the creation of new technical schools in the mid-1980s and Sexton advocated a commitment to giving schools greater autonomy (see section 2.5.3). Oliver Letwin was also brought in as a policy adviser to work with Sexton on educational vouchers (1982–3) and would later go on to join the No. 10 Policy Unit (1983–86) under Brian Griffiths (Halcrow, 1989; Knight, 1990; Simon, 1999).

Kenneth Baker took over as Secretary of State from Joseph in 1986 and until his departure in 1989 would bring about the most extensive education reforms of the Thatcher administration. His tenure in the DES oversaw sweeping changes in education policy, including the creation of CTCs and the passage of the 1988 Education Reform Act (Aldrich, 2002; McCulloch, 1994). Kenneth Baker came to the DES with an extensive technical background after a previous posting as Minister of Information Technology. He had a strong relationship with industry and a very active interest in technology education (Lawrence, 1992; Whitty et al., 1993). Kenneth Baker did not have as extensive think tank connections as Keith Joseph, but his close relationship with industry and associated pressure groups was an important aspect of the established narrative of the creation of the CTCs.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

One of the most difficult aspects of my research was the process of narrowing down the materials to examine. The last section outlined, on the basis of secondary literature, the important actors and organisations relevant to this thesis. This was used to provide a guide to sampling the vast array of material that is available on the discussion of education policy in this period. I searched for materials relating to the outlined actors and organisations with constraints on location (England), ideological leanings (political right), and time period (1979 General Election to end of 1986 calendar year). This section outlines the process of data collection and analysis that I used in this thesis.

3.3.1 *Archival Visits*

One of the difficulties with archival research is working with the collections from a distance. The catalogues of archives may have box level data, but not file or document level information. As more archives are digitised, or moved to more comprehensive cataloguing systems, it becomes easier to make the best use of an archival visit. In most cases, my fieldwork required initial archival visits to determine the collection holdings and then follow-up visits to focus on the detail of the holdings (the first round of archival visits in the main data collection described in section 3.1.1). The usage of digital technologies also makes the process of analysis easier by allowing me to take photographs or scanned quality versions of the documents. This allowed me to conduct thematic coding on physical copies of the documents (thematic analysis discussed in section 3.3.4).

I found the issue of what to include and what to exclude particularly difficult with the archival material. I began with a broad approach looking at records in major collections that related to education with a date range of late 1970s to mid-1980s: Department of Education and Science (DES) records at the National Archive; the Conservative Party Archive at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University; and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) collections at the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University.¹⁸ In this process, I narrowed down my focus to collections with

¹⁸ I also visited the Labour Party Archive at the People's History Museum in Manchester and the National Union of Teachers and Trades Union Congress archives at London Metropolitan University. The documents from these collections helped inform my thinking and gave me a 'feel' for the area, but were not used in the final analysis. This was also supplemented by visits to two local archives in London (Croydon and Lewisham) that held records on the creation of individual CTCs. Unfortunately,

the material most relevant to my research questions. I conducted targeted visits to the main archives and to additional archives to look at specific private collections: the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) archive at the LSE, Richard Cockett's papers at the LSE, Alfred Sherman's papers at Royal Holloway University, and RV Jones' papers at the Churchill Archive Centre. I also accessed documents online and in person through the Thatcher Archive at the Churchill Archive Centre. I attempted to access files that had not yet been released to the National Archive or Thatcher Archive through Freedom of Information requests sent to the current Department for Education; this resulted in access to some additional documents, but these focused on funding contracts generated during the CTCs' implementation phase and are therefore not relevant to the focus of this research (I was unaware of the details of the content of the files at the time of request).

The archival documents that focused on internal government discussion around ideas about education used in this thesis include: speeches by politicians (those mentioned in section 3.2.4), internal DES briefing documents, internal DES memos and minutes of DES meetings regarding education policy. The archival documents that focused on external discussion, those primarily relating to think tanks' and pressure groups' ideas about education, used in this thesis include: internal group correspondence, drafts of publications and records of group meetings (internally and with members of the government).

3.3.2 Published Document Collection

Archival documents are easy to identify as primary source material, but determining which published documents to include as primary sources required constant reference to the rationale for data selection shown in section 3.2.¹⁹ As McCulloch (2004) discusses, some historians argue that there is a hierarchy of documents for historical methods, placing hard-to-reach archival material at the top of the hierarchy with published documents below. With any document for analysis, including archival documents, key questions must be asked to determine inclusion: is it authentic, is it credible reporting of what occurred and is it a representative of

these archives only included materials on the implementation of the CTC programme, not on the creation of the programme which is the focus of this thesis.

¹⁹ "Primary sources are those produced by those directly involved" (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000: 79).

documents of its type (Scott, 1990). There is great value in looking at published material beyond that which is available at the archives as long as it meets the above criteria.

As with archival material, published documents were also included or excluded based on where they fell within a date range (late 1970s to mid-1980s) and based on their relevance to secondary education. The notable exception to this was my inclusion of the *Black Papers*, which were published prior to this period. The *Black Papers* were necessary to include because of their clear significance to conservative thinking on education (see section 3.2.3). For publications by policymakers and interest groups (think tanks and pressure groups outlined in section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) outside of the *Black Papers*, I used the date restrictions and relevance restrictions mentioned above. The published documents that focused on policymakers' ideas about education were: memoirs, Education Acts, White Papers, Conservative Party manifestos and parliamentary debates. For think tanks and pressure groups, published pamphlets and reports were used in this thesis. The availability of various documents ranged from the very rare, which were difficult to obtain, to the more broadly available and frequently referenced texts, but I was able to obtain most either through online repositories or through libraries (the LSE and the British Library).

3.3.3 *Elite Interviews*

Interviews provide a way to add detail and fill in gaps in the written record. Semi-structured interviews are also useful to supplement documentary analysis where there are "identified gaps in the narrative" (Fitz & Halpin, 1994: 37). As such, the interviews were limited in number and to those individuals identified as being important actors involved in the discussion of education policy in this period. As will be discussed later, survival and access are barriers to document collection (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000); oral history can provide a way of filling in these gaps (allowing for issues with survival, memory and access discussed in section 3.4). In keeping with a modified technique to the one used by Saran,²⁰ I needed to ask all my questions in one sitting as I was unlikely to get a second session with the

²⁰ Saran recommends unstructured interviews whereas I used semi-structured interviews.

elites and “successful use of the unstructured interview requires very careful preparation, based on prior analysis of raw data drawn from archives and secondary sources” (Saran, 1985: 220). Having some structure, or a prepared set of potential questions, also allowed me some degree of flexibility and control (Fitz & Halpin, 1994; Saran, 1985).

One of the interviews was conducted in the preliminary phase of data collection (Cyril Taylor, former political adviser and head of the CTC Trust). This was a way of using a ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘credible’ informant (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) to help confirm the data selection rationale and for “general orientation” (Saran, 1985: 220) to understanding the setting. One of the benefits of using interviews is that it allowed me to “obtain some understanding of the social, cultural and historical setting” (Burgess, 1985: 8) in which the research was being conducted. It also provided a means of access to other elites, as I could use my conversation with the informant as a way of legitimising my research in the eyes of the other interviewees. Based on the rationale for data collection, I created a potential list of ten primary and ten secondary targets for interviews (politicians, political advisers, civil servants and think tank members). Potential interviewees were contacted by letter which outlined my research and focus as well as a rationale for why I wished to interview them; all letters were sent without prior introduction, but where useful I mentioned my preliminary interview with my key informant to give legitimacy to my research.

Of the ten individuals I contacted, four responded favourably and three resulted in interviews (Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education; Stuart Sexton, political adviser to Mark Carlisle and Keith Joseph; and Brian Griffiths, Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit). One resulted in postal correspondence by providing copies of think tank documents (Caroline Cox, Chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group). As the interviews were semi-structured, I tailored specific interview schedules for each interviewee. Preparing an interview schedule with open-ended questions designed for each individual allowed me to reflect on policymakers’ “different location[s] within the policy process” (Fitz & Halpin, 1994: 36).

Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 75 minutes and were carried out at either the interviewee’s office or at LSE. I attempted to cover as much of the interview schedule as possible, but still allowed flexibility to follow up on new lines

of enquiry. One of the benefits of semi-structured interviews was this flexibility, which allowed me to “formulate and reformulate” lines of inquiry based on new information (Burgess, 1985: 8). As there were specific gaps in my understanding that I hoped to cover in the interviews, where possible I ensured there was time to address issues related to those gaps and revisit topics at later points in the interview that were not given sufficient time. In this case establishing a rapport is particularly important in order to access elite motivations as well as to establish trust and confidence (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Measor, 1985).

3.3.4 Thematic Coding and Interpreting the Data

As discussed in my research approach (see section 3.1), I used repeated thematic coding and analysis. As a result of my research focus, and examination of the secondary literature, I isolated the major themes that I wanted to investigate in my research: those that focused on structure of service (choice and diversity), those that focused on content of education (aims and purposes), and those that related to ideas about control (management and funding). These dominant themes are reported upon in turn in my first three empirical chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively). I also examined the documents for sub-themes that emerged from the texts. These allowed me to construct a thematic codebook where I noted sub-themes and exemplars from the text that related to these sub-themes (Bryman, 2008; Flick, 2002).²¹ After the final phase of data collection, when there was sufficient coverage of materials from key actors and interest groups, I completed a more detailed coding of sub-themes. As many of the documents were scanned images or photographs I decided to code the documents by hand rather than using more formal software like NVivo. These sub-themes have informed the structure of my empirical chapters. This analysis was particularly important for answering my first research question in order to understand similarities and differences in the external and internal discussions.

Alongside the thematic coding, as this was historical work, it was also important to consider the context of the documents as another way of informing the analysis. As Scott (1990) argues, one must consider key aspects of the documents: the author (who produced it and why), the context (what were the circumstance of the

²¹ I attended a doctoral training centre session on thematic analysis which helped to inform my approach.

production), the audience (who was it intended for), the processes in which it was produced (origins and development), the interests that underlay the development (what was it trying to do), and the influence (did it achieve what it set out to do). Considering the context was particularly important to understanding interest group publications: what were the agendas of the authors and how the publications were intended to influence government (directly, or indirectly by influencing public sentiment).

3.4 Limitation and Challenges

Using historical methods to study the discussion of ideas about education in the 1980s, has distinct benefits as discussed earlier (see sections 3.1), but also has some limitations and challenges. This section outlines the particular issue of survival (both of documents and interviewees) which impacts upon research conducted thirty years after the events discussed. It also brings out issues of access both to documents and to interviewees. There were also potential issues associated with interviewing: issues of memory, recall bias and elites controlling narratives. There are also issues which must be discussed that are fundamental to any research, but particularly qualitative research: reflexivity and ethics.

3.4.1 Survival

One of the biggest challenges to this work, as with much historical work, was locating documents and individuals thirty years after the event: “documents have differential survival rates and those which do survive do not always provide all the information required” (Andrew, 1985: 156). The issues of document survival were particularly problematic for my research: what was recorded, what was kept and what was made available. First and foremost, archival work relies on good record keeping amongst the relevant actors and interest groups about their activities in a certain period, which provides a key survival challenge. One must also be aware of the bias that can develop in historical records depending on who was the best record keeper; for example, a civil servant in one unit might be better at keeping detailed accounts of events which survived, whereas another civil servant might not keep as detailed records of discussions that would have showed conflicting accounts of events. Additionally, when using archival records it is important to account for the fact that selection has already occurred before documents are transferred to the

archive (Andrew, 1985; McCulloch & Richardson, 2000). Only those that have been deemed to be ‘historically significant’ are the ones that survive and are preserved in official holdings. This is a type of selection bias again shaping narratives in a particular direction: the issue of ‘official’ versions of events. Finally, the issue of what is made available will be discussed in the following section on access, but the transfer and closure rules restrict what is made available and when. In the United Kingdom, official government documents must be transferred to the National Archive within a set period of time. Previously this was known as the ‘30 years rule’ where documents needed to be transferred within 30 years, but the UK is now moving to a ‘20 years rule’ (The National Archive, 2015). Closure rules determine the length of time government files are closed after the point of transfer to the archive; this is done to restrict public access to information deemed to be sensitive. In many cases, using multiple archival sources other than the official national archive, including personal collections, can provide a way of ensuring that dominant narratives are not the result of survival biases.

Some work on contemporary historical methods has noted that issues with document survival can be solved to some degree by using interviews to supplement the documents (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000; McCulloch, 2004). Since this research looks at the discussions of education policy ideas years after the events, there is also a problem with survival of interviewees. The events examined in this thesis happened thirty years prior, which means that a number of actors relevant to this research passed away prior to, or during, the process of data collection. This means that more contemporary personal narrative accounts were not available for all individuals. Where possible, memoirs were used to help supplement gaps resulting from survival issues.

3.4.2 Access

There were a number of levels of access that I needed to navigate for my research including access to individual documents, archival collections and elites involved in education policy discussions in this period. My archival work was partially restricted by time with the transfer rules that govern when government documents are made available to archives (see section 3.4.1). Additionally, with policies that still have an ‘active component’, various files may still be in use in current policymaking, which

creates another barrier to obtaining documents. In both cases, Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) can provide a useful way of accessing documents; FOI requests were introduced under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which allow individuals to access items that have not yet been transferred or opened, assuming no exemptions apply (The National Archive, 2015). Additionally, certain collections may have their own criteria for when they make documents available which need to be addressed. With the Conservative Party Archive, special permission is needed from the Conservative Party Headquarters in order to work with files still protected by closure rules. In one case, I was denied permission to view one file, which required waiting until the New Year when closure rules lifted.

Gaining access to individual archives is also a time consuming process and each archive has different rules about the requesting and viewing of files. Accessing the National Archive and British Library was relatively straightforward owing to clear guidance, but there was a time lag in-between requesting and viewing documents which required placing requests prior to the visit. This required prior knowledge about the files I wished to access. As was stated earlier (see section 3.3.1), this involved a good deal of trial and error to determine what was of relevance. Most collections required prior contact to gain access, each with a different process. The Conservative Party Archive, held in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, had the most detailed access requirements. They required that I provide a letter of recommendation from my own academic department and provide a statement of research need as to why I needed to work with the collection. Similar regulations applied at Royal Holloway University.

As stated in section 3.3.3, access was also an issue for reaching elites as it relied on them receiving the letter or getting the letter past gatekeepers to elites (Burgess, 1985; Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994). In one case an interview could not be arranged as the gatekeepers changed which caused delays to my request to set a date and eventually resulted in no response. This meant I was unable to interview the elite. Where possible I tried to “exploit pre-existing links” (Walford, 2012: 112), for example using my existing connection to my knowledge informant and through changing

how I positioned myself in the letter²² (see section 3.4.4 for a detailed discussion of my identity). Some researchers argue that access can be easier if the interviewer is perceived as ‘harmless’ (Grek, 2011: 238) (discussed in section 3.4.4). Elites were retired from their previous roles and some researchers have argued that it is easier to access them under these circumstances and that they may divulge information not generally known (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994; Walford, 2012). However, as many had moved on from previous roles it became difficult to locate interviewees in order to approach them for a meeting. Additionally, as was stated in the last section, survival also played a large role in interviewing elites.

3.4.3 Memory, Recall Bias and Controlling the Narrative

As with all historical research there were inevitably some issues with memory and recall bias as individuals could not remember the events as clearly as they would have at the time (frequently saying during interviews “you have to understand it was 30 years ago”). Using prompts can be a way of facilitating recall, but must be used cautiously to not bias the respondent in a particular direction. Additionally, asking the same question in multiple ways can provide a trigger to memory. Triangulation with sources that were contemporaneous to the events, and with key actor memoirs, provided the best means of checking inevitable recall bias (Batteson and Ball, 1995) as it allowed me to “compare and cross-check our informants’ accounts” (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994: 191).

One of the other issues with interviewing elites is that they are skilled at controlling the narrative of events (Walford, 2012); semi-structured interviews therefore allow the interviewer more control than just letting interviewees talk (Fitz & Halpin, 1994). However, this means that even gaining access to an elite does not ensure that they will answer all questions, or answer them in their entirety. Elites may also challenge the premise of the question (Saran, 1985) and they may change direction in the interview (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994). It is essential to prepare in detail for the interview as elites already know the area well and will not supply information available elsewhere (Walford, 2012); therefore, I prepared clear rationales for

²² This entailed using formal or informal versions of my name or by referencing my nationality (American) to elicit interest.

questions and modified questions for each interviewee in order to elicit responses on particular subjects.

3.4.4 Research Reflexivity

It is also important to acknowledge both my identity and positionality as a researcher as being issues that impacted my interviews. As discussed above, researchers argue that it is sometimes easier to gain access or to control conversations by being perceived a certain way, for example in terms of gender or as being a harmless outsider (Gewirtz & Ozga, 1994; Grek, 2011). How much did my position as a young female researcher influence interviews with older male subjects? In some interviews, there were attempts made by interviewees to give me advice about the direction of my research which may not have happened with differently positioned researchers. Further, my status as an American is also complex in this way, as it provided a bridge of connection for many of the interviewees with their own American experiences or interests. It also provided a possible ideological touchstone given dominant neo-liberal trends in policy in my native country, where policymakers assumed I had similar ideological preferences. It also perhaps allowed me to be a harmless outsider, one who would not have the same preconceptions and biases as a British researcher.

As a researcher, and particularly as a historian, my own viewpoints are a key factor in determining how I interpret information. In the field of history, consideration of which disciplinary area I categorise myself as being part of indicates a particular view of the study and interpretation of history. The historian's aim is to reconstruct the past through themes and meaning, but we each bring our own biases and viewpoints into that interpretation (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000). My work focuses on the thoughts and actions of select elites, which some historians might consider traditional or conservative in its approach. The methods used, however, blend disciplines drawing from political history looking at the role of ideas in political systems (Pedersen, 2004), but also some aspects of intellectual history by looking at ideas themselves (though not as through a study of discourse or language as would be more traditional in intellectual history). My focus in the end is on the emerging field of history of education and more specifically the sub-field of education policy history.

3.4.5 *Ethics*

Even though I did not work with typically vulnerable groups, there are always issues of trust in all research. This relates to how much about my own views I expressed to those I was working with to gain access and information (Walford, 2012). When working with elites there is less scope for anonymity for the interviewee, particularly given the importance of the position of each individual in the narrative and what that indicates about their knowledge of events. At each interview, however, I asked interviewees if they were comfortable with being named and with the contents of the interviews being quoted in the thesis; all confirmed that they were. Archives also placed restrictions on the usage of certain materials and the publication of original documents which I have adhered to in this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter covered the nature of the research design and the approaches taken, the rationale for data collection, the specifics of the process of data collection and analysis, and finally the limitations and challenges faced in this work. It shows the value of using historical methods both in order to understand the context of the policy, but also what can be learned from it. This chapter also set the scene in terms of understanding the different actors and organisations that are discussed throughout this thesis and their relationships to each other. This chapter also highlighted how my positionality, identity and views as a historian have contributed to the way that information has been analysed.

4. Choice and Diversity

Introduction

This chapter explores the ideas of choice and diversity in education that were discussed between 1979 and 1986. Chapter 4 uses historical data to answer research question 1: How did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science, with regard to choice and diversity? To answer this question section 4.1 explores ideas that were discussed external to the Conservative Government by think tanks, pressure groups and through the contributions from the authors of the *Black Papers*. Section 4.2 then focuses on the internal discussion of these ideas within the Conservative Government to highlight instances of similarity in language and formal connections between the external and internal discussion. This shows movement of ideas between the two areas and highlights the tangled networks that facilitated this movement. Finally, section 4.3 is a case study comparing and contrasting the different models for specialist schools introduced during this period; this section brings together many of the ideas presented in both the external and internal discussions to show in a specific instance the movement of ideas between these two areas, as a means of addressing research question 1.

4.1 External Discussions: By Right Leaning Interest Groups

Choice and diversity were repeated ideas throughout the discussion of secondary education in this period. Choice was seen as a way of improving standards in the education sector. Interest groups argued that facilitating the right to choice in education would empower parents to take responsibility for education. Parents could then make decisions that best suited the individual needs of their children.

Discussions of choice and diversity also included proposals for the mechanisms that would help to achieve these aims. Many of the interest groups noted the value of voucher schemes to make choice in education a reality and to better facilitate competition within the state sector. The diversity mechanisms proposed in these discussions included introducing variety in the types of schools available in the state

sector and encouraging easier movement of individuals between schools in the state and independent sectors.

The views in this section come from conservative educationalists from a number of think tanks: the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) (and its Education Study Group (CPSESG)), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), the Social Affairs Unit (SAU), and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI). It also includes the views of contributors to the *Black Papers* and members of the Hillgate Group. To provide context to the analysis, this section relies on information collected from interviews with political advisers (the author conducted these interviews thirty years after the events discussed). All other material included in this section is primary source material: publications from the various groups (in-text citations include information about interest group authorship); the *Black Papers*; and archival material from the CPS (archival sources are footnoted).

4.1.1 *Raising Standards: Criticism of Comprehensive Education*

As discussed in sections 2.2.2 and 3.2.3, the *Black Papers* were significant in shaping conservative thought leading up to this period, particularly in criticising the comprehensive system and advocating the role of choice in education. The *Black Paper* authors, as well as others at the CPS and IEA, were responding to what they perceived as a ‘crisis’ in educational standards (see section 2.2.2)²³:

I think the general movement was growing...but it [*Black Papers*] was certainly a symbol of what was happening: a rejection of the free-for-all of the early sixties.²⁴

Stuart Sexton (one of the *Black Paper* authors; see section 3.2.4) discussed the rationale for the focus on choice within the *Black Papers*:

In the 1960s all sorts of education went haywire, went crazy. Child centred learning, etc. etc. A small group of us published what were known then as the Black Papers, and I was one of those. And the essence, particularly for my bit, was that education – schools – would benefit greatly if parents had greater choice and if the schools had to respond to that choice.²⁵

²³ The subheading for the second *Black Paper* was *The Crisis in Education*.

²⁴ Sexton Interview – September 2014

²⁵ Ibid.

For these authors, the lack of regulation in the system, particularly in classroom teaching and in the usage of ‘progressive’ methods, led to a ‘crisis’ in education standards (Black Papers - Cox and Dyson, 1969). They felt that increasing parental choice would force schools to compete for pupils, which would then lead to improvement in standards. This reflects a movement towards utilising the ‘demand-side’ of the market, where parental demand would drive up quality in educational standards as schools competed for their custom (see section 2.2.4).

In the CPSESG view, the introduction of comprehensive education meant standardised education for all, but education had been ‘levelled down’²⁶ to the lowest common denominator, thereby impacting educational standards:

Over the last fifteen years, education policy has been dominated by an emphasis on equality, including equality of outcome, which has been at the cost of freedom and the development of different abilities and interests of individuals. The result has been the growth of socialist policies which have led to a drastic reduction in freedom of choice and, especially in many secondary schools and some colleges, a levelling down or homogenization in the quality of education. (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982a: 5)

The CPSESG placed their view of education in opposition to the ‘socialist’, ‘egalitarian’ status quo of the education system which prioritised equality at the cost of standards (mirroring similar statements in the Black Papers - Maude, 1969; Pedley, 1969; Szamuely, 1969). The CPSESG also argued that the restrictive nature of the comprehensive system compromised ‘freedom of choice’ in education and failed to meet the needs of the individual; each of these will be discussed in turn in the following sections.

4.1.2 *Freedom, Rights and Responsibilities*

The idea of freedom in the CPSESG publications²⁷ was nearly always associated with the freedom to make choices about education. The group stated that that one of their key aims was to further explore the idea of freedom and to advocate for “more freedom and more choice in our education system” (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982a: 5). They discussed the importance of “restor[ing] more freedom in the

²⁶ This directly links to the *Black Papers*, which describes grammar schools as a way of “levelling-up” education for the most able (Black Papers - Cox & Dyson, 1970: 9).

²⁷ Thatcher Archive (THCR) – THCR 2/11/3/2 Part 2 f53 - Arrangements for Centre for Policy Studies Annual Meeting and report of the Policy Study Groups: p. 5 of report. There was an intention to explore the concept of freedom more generally, which appears never to have been developed further.

interest of the individual and society” which they felt had been compromised in the name of “overriding ideals of equality” (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982a: 14). There are two understandings of freedom and liberty contained in their argument. The CPSESG noted that freedom must be restored to the education system; this implies that freedom had been restricted under the previous comprehensive system. Drawing on the idea of negative liberty (see section 2.2.4; Berlin, 2002), therefore, individuals needed to be freed from the restrictions of the comprehensive system. On the other side, the CPSESG argued for policies that would give individuals the freedom to exercise choice in education, or positive liberty.

The concept of ‘freedom of choice’ was also used interchangeably with the idea of parents in particular having the ‘right to choice’ in accessing the education for their child they felt was compatible with their ideals. In some of its publications, CPSESG members linked this rights-based justification of parental choice with the rights enshrined in Article 26 of the UN Human Rights Declaration²⁸ and the European Convention on Human Rights (CPSESG - Naylor and Marks, 1982: 126; CPSESG - Naylor, 1981:13). They draw on the idea that parents should have a ‘right to choice’ about the education service they use as “to deny parents the right to make the choice is just undemocratic; it is anti-democratic” (CPSESG - Naylor and Norcross, 1981: 2). In addition to the arguments for the ‘freedom of choice’ and ensuring the ‘right to choice’, the CPSESG members also emphasised the importance of individual autonomy and empowerment. For the CPSESG, the parent making choices about education was an ‘empowered’ individual in contrast to the ‘disempowered’ service user who should accept the ‘authoritarian’, ‘one size fits all’ vision of socialist education:

We need to replace socialist, totalitarian uniformity by Conservative diversity and freedom of choice, Socialist central control by Conservative encouragement for individual initiative and responsibility, and Socialist secrecy by Conservative openness and accountability.²⁹

The CPSESG argued that the individual must be given back ‘power’, ‘choice’ and ‘responsibility’ to control the education that they want rather than accepting what

²⁸ Article 26 on education, in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, states that all people have the right to education, and that it should be free of charge (United Nations, 1948). It further includes a statement about the rights that parents have regarding education: “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their child” (United Nations, 1948: Art 26).

²⁹ THCR – Centre for Policy Studies’ Education Study Group Draft: The Right to Learn, 1981: 14

they are given. This empowerment argument then also has a second side which involves encouraging responsibility for the individual over his or her child's education. This again links back to the idea of 'freedom from' a system that restricted the individual taking responsibility.

As discussed in section 3.2, many members of the CPSESG were also members of the Hillgate Group.³⁰ The Hillgate Group released a manifesto on education in 1986 which also restated this theme of parental right to choice:

The first and most important step in any comprehensive reform of the state education system, is to give more power to the parents. We believe this should be done by giving all parents a right which the rich have always enjoyed – the right to choose and to obtain the most suitable education for their children. Parents should be free to withdraw their children from schools that are unsatisfactory, and to place them in the schools of their choice. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 10)

The authors focused on the rights of parents to make choices as a means of empowering parents. For the Hillgate Group, parental empowerment was best achieved when parents were able to activate their 'right' to make choices about education. The content of the manifesto shows the continued importance of these themes and debates in the intellectual environment in which the CTCs emerged; the manifesto was released in December 1986 and the CTCs were announced two months earlier, in October of that year.

The CPSESG talked about the benefits of a system that would be more responsive to parental and pupil demands in education. The CPSESG argued that parents had never had the opportunity to access a 'real' market in education, as "education is run in the interests of the producer" (CPSESG - Seldon, 1982: 104). Here the CPSESG linked together the idea of schools providing education as a 'market good', and parents as users or consumers. The CPSESG, the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) publications all discussed restructuring the education system to make it more responsive to the needs of the consumer not the producer. The CPSESG talked about the lack of responsiveness to users, which restricted ability to approve of the service as "parents are unable to vote with their feet, so no one knows whether they approve of a school or not" (CPSESG - Seldon, 1982: 105).

³⁰ Manifesto authors: Caroline Cox (also CPS/ESG), Jessica Douglas-Home, John Marks (also CPS/ESG; Black Papers), Lawrence Norcross (also CPS/ESG; Black Papers), and Roger Scruton.

The SAU members took a more pragmatic approach, arguing that “the education system will only become responsive to the development of talents...if it is geared to the needs of the consumer” (SAU - Peacock, 1984: 11). The ASI brought these two arguments together in their *Omega File: Education Policy*, in which they said that ‘producer capture’ prevents consumer expression of views and prevents competition for users, as “without this source of consumer pressure, it is impossible for a service to be run in the interests of customers” (ASI, 1984:1). These think tanks pushed for a system that was more responsive to the consumer, which indicated a desire for a demand-led system with greater competition between providers, rather than a single choice such as the comprehensive system. This also indicated a desire for a more individualised approach to education.

4.1.3 Meeting Individual Needs

In the CPSESG publications, the members argued that many of the problems of the comprehensive system were a result of attempting to make one system meet all pupil needs and further that “there is nothing to be gained by forcing all the existing institutions into a common mould” (CPSESG - Naylor, 1981: 23). This ‘right to choice’ in education was closely paired with a need for greater variety and diversity within education as “freedom is spurious if there are no alternatives from which to choose” (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982a: 5). The CPSESG members argued that the education system should instead provide a way of meeting the variety of individual skills and capabilities, rather than imposing ‘uniformity’ as had been done under the comprehensive system (similar language to the Black Papers - Maude, 1969: 8).³¹ This argument linked to the debate about the purpose of education and the differing views of egalitarians and ‘differentiators’ (see section 2.2.5):

Egalitarians wish to see distinctions between pupils in the educational system ended while differentiators recognise that the individual needs of children may call for differences of treatment and educational provision (CPSESG - Naylor, 1981: 5).

There was a duality in the CPSESG between ensuring that most able and least able were both catered for. They argued that comprehensive education could not achieve this as “mixed ability teaching may have very undesirable effects, not only for more able children, but also for those who learn more slowly” (CPSESG - Cox and Marks,

³¹ “The attempt to impose uniformity by eliminating the effects of accident will fail in the end, but it may do great harm before the reaction comes. It is only through variety that progress is achieved” (Black Papers - Maude, 1969: 8).

1982: 6). Some form of differentiation, according to the CPSESG, was essential to counteract the negative impact of mixed ability education in which all pupils were taught at the same pace regardless of their capabilities.

Interest groups proposed setting and streaming as a means of addressing individual differences in ability (Black Papers - Cox and Dyson, 1970). This tied into the idea that education should be more individualised and should be more responsive to the individual needs of pupils. Stuart Sexton, *Black Paper* author, explained that this ‘differentiation’ within schools was seen as a solution to the problems of the comprehensive system. It provided more options for the high achievers, and the less academically gifted, within the state sector:

When comprehensives were brought in the initial theory from the comprehensive people was that you treated every child the same. If you had multiple classes for a big school, nevertheless every class was treated the same. That was the initial theory which soon collapsed when it didn’t seem to work. You were trying to teach the highly academic child alongside the child that was having a great deal of difficulty. So by the time I’m talking there was still an argument about streaming and setting, those were the two words. And if you like, a grammar school is a streamed section. But with a comprehensive, eventually yes you did get streaming and setting in a comprehensive. The difference being you either got all children in class A who were academic, or setting all those good at maths in that class. Both of those were becoming popular.³²

Differentiation in education, as explained by Sexton, included setting – grouping pupils based on aptitude in one subject, or streaming – grouping together all high achieving pupils. This tied back to the idea expressed by interest groups that mixed ability education held some students back. The *Black Papers* argued that certain mechanisms provided a more individualised education to students within the state system, such as setting and streaming.

Arguments about building differentiation into education to meet individual needs also came out, not only in learning abilities, but also in terms of showing a specific talent for certain types of education (also a theme in the Black Papers - Sexton, 1977). The SAU discussed this in terms of “recognising that different talents and aptitudes can only be nurtured by different types of education” (SAU - Peacock, 1984: 10). In his publication for the IEA comparing the state and private sectors of

³² Sexton Interview – September 2014

education, Stanley Dennison echoed the same language as the SAU when he stated that “education, in the proper sense” is about the development of “talents and abilities” and “is intensely individual” (IEA - Dennison, 1984: 82). This argument also alluded to the tripartite era differentiation, with different schools theoretically designed to support the growth of different talents (see section 2.2.1). The Hillgate Group also expressed a similar view on differentiation in education by placing emphasis on abilities, subject aptitudes and interests:

Children have different abilities, talents and interests, and it is destructive of all children, and not just the most academically gifted, to impose a single form of education ... We therefore believe that schools should be encouraged to return to a system of differentiated education, with separate classes, and if necessary separate institutions, to cater for the many and diverse gifts of the nation’s children. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 11)

The various interest groups seemed to agree that differentiated education would ensure that educational services met individual needs in terms of: the ability of students, different talents in particular subjects, and specific educational interests.

One of the issues with this conception of differentiation was that most proposals from interest groups relied on a degree of selection. This was one of the problems of the tripartite system to which comprehensivisation was seen as a partial remedy (see section 2.2.2). This acceptance of some degree of selection provided an important understanding of what these groups viewed to be the aims and purposes of education (explored in detail in section 5.2):

Far too few of our children will reach the higher standards which they are able and willing to attain, especially in the harder and/or shortage subjects, if we continue to refuse, in the name of undivisive comprehension, to crowd the willing and talented into the classrooms of those now deplorably few teachers able to offer modestly advanced instruction. If we really do want both to get the trained abilities which the country needs and ensure that all our children achieve the maximum of which they are capable, then selection cannot be avoided. (CPSESG - Flew, 1982: 24)

The CPSESG discussed the idea of re-introducing selection into the education system through a differentiated system, particularly in relation to specialist schools (see section 4.1.5 and 4.3). The CPSESG felt that the introduction of comprehensive

education had, in an effort to increase equality, undermined individual opportunity (similar statements were made in the later Hillgate Group manifesto).³³

4.1.4 *Choice Mechanisms: Vouchers*

One of the key discussions about choice in education was how to implement market mechanisms effectively (see section 2.2.4). The way to ensure ‘real’ choice, according to the CPSESG, was through the introduction of “alternatives”, as well as ensuring that users have “adequate knowledge with which to make an informed choice” (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982: 5). CPSESG members highlighted their awareness of the problem of differential access for different populations in a choice-based education system, which they linked to their general criticism of the local comprehensive school:

We believe children most likely to suffer from such changes are not middle class children, whose parents can “work the system” by moving house or by “going private” but working class children who have no alternative but to attend their neighbourhood school. (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982: 6)

The implication of their discussion was that the choice in education that already existed was a privileged situation for parents with the resources and capabilities, but less fortunate individuals were ‘stuck’ with their ‘bad’ local comprehensive. CPSESG members always added the caveat that parents can only be empowered to make this choice given sufficient information with ensured mobility between schools and funding linked to enrolment (CPSESG - Flew, 1983; Seldon, 1982). If pupils could not easily move between schools without undue burden the market could not function. Further, they argued if parents were unaware of the differences between schools, or of their own capability to make choices, the market would not work.

As discussed earlier, the last two *Black Papers* advocated for the voucher as a tool for facilitating choice (see section 2.2.4); however, as Stuart Sexton said in the *Black Papers*, vouchers are “not essential to the exercise of parental choice...nevertheless, it could well be very useful to the exercise of free choice” (Black Papers - Sexton, 1977: 88). Vouchers were seen as a mechanism that gave power to parental choice

³³ “We also believe that the educational opportunities provided to the children of the less well off are steadily declining, and that the massive propaganda offered in the name of ‘equality’ has had precisely the opposite effect to the one intended.” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 6)

by encouraging competition. The CPSESG also strongly supported the usage of vouchers as a means of facilitating choice (CPSESG - Flew, 1983; Seldon, 1982). Marjorie Seldon³⁴ was one of the CPSESG members most active in outlining the benefits. She argued that the voucher was a means of taking ‘control’ away from producers and giving it to parents:

No one now living in Britain has experienced a market in education in which schools, public and private, offer their “goods” to parents, of all social classes, who in turn would choose and pay for their preferred school out of their own pocket and with a return of taxes. (CPSESG - Seldon, 1982: 104)

Her argument drew on the idea discussed earlier (see section 4.1.2) of the state education sector not being sufficiently responsive to its customers, as parents lacked the power to give financial weight to their choices, which would have encouraged competition. The CPSESG argued that parents who were ‘customers’ would demand and expect more from the education they were getting:

If he [the parent] were paying directly he would be the honoured customer as he is in an independent school, not the humble suppliant...he would not accept an inferior product if he was handing out real money for it, his interest in a school would be closer, and he could – and would – withdraw his custom if dissatisfied. (CPSESG - Cottrell, 1982: 56)

CPSESG argued that in theory the vouchers would give weight to parental decisions by linking school funding to the pupils who attended; parents would then hold the ‘power of the purse strings’. The group supported the voucher for its capacity “to give parents powers and choices which they do not now possess” (CPSESG - Flew, 1983: 3). The CPSESG hoped that publications on this issue would “add fuel to the case for the provision of choice in education”.³⁵

The CPSESG publications were not the only ones in this period that contained arguments in support for the vouchers, or similar schemes. John Marks and Caroline Cox also advocated for the introduction of ‘educational allowances’ in their 1981 publication for the SAU (the particulars of the funding aspects are discussed in section 6.2.2). They argued that in such a system that gave money to the parents, “power would shift irreversibly to the people” (SAU - Marks and Cox, 1981: 20). The IEA frequently published arguments about the economic benefits of the voucher

³⁴ Majorie Seldon, founder of Friends of the Education Voucher Experiment in Representative Regions (FEVER) and wife of economist Arthur Seldon (another advocate of the voucher and co-founder of the IEA).

³⁵ Cockett Papers – COCKETT/1/10 – Minutes of the Meeting of the Directors for the Centre for Policy Studies – 12 June 1984: 3

starting in 1964 and continuing into the 1980s.³⁶ In his publication for the IEA in 1984, Stanley Dennison argued that vouchers could encourage “individual initiative” in the state sector (Dennison, 1984: 91). Even as late as 1984, educationalists associated with the CPS met as part of Alfred Sherman’s (co-founder of the CPS, see section 3.2.1) seminar series, after his official departure from the CPS. They discussed how little had been done on education in the past decade and mentioned that vouchers might be a useful tool for making change.³⁷ In their desiderata they wanted structural changes which included “bringing back discussion of the Voucher principle – particularly for village schools”.³⁸

4.1.5 *Diversity Mechanisms: Between-Sector and In-Sector*

As Stuart Sexton said in the *Black Papers*, vouchers and similar mechanisms can facilitate choice as long as there are sufficient alternatives available for people to choose from:

Even vouchers cannot give absolute choice. Particularly in early days of any voucher scheme, there must be sufficient choice available to start with, else when the voucher system failed to produce the choice expected it would quickly fall into disrepute. (Black Paper - Sexton, 1977: 88)

For all the interest groups discussed, choice could not exist without diversity, but the type of diversity varied considerably; as noted earlier, two particular variations were discussed in this period: ‘between-sector’ and ‘in-sector’ diversity (see section 2.2.5).

‘Between-sector’ diversity referred to schools in the state sector (state provided and funded) and schools in the independent sector (privately provided and funded). Many of the CPSESG members argued that the creation of some mechanism to bridge the divide between the sectors was an essential step in the development of real choice in education.³⁹ The CPSESG again noted the issues of differential access that restricted who could exit the state system and access the independent sector:

We have divided our secondary school children into two nations. These are the “Privileged” whose parents can choose their schooling because they can

³⁶ IEA publications on education financing: Peacock & Wiseman (1964) *Education for Democrats*, West (1965) *Education and the State*, Beales (1967) *Education: A Framework for Choice*, Maynard (1975) *Experiment with Choice in Education*, Dennison (1984) *Choice in Education*, and Seldon, (1986) *The Riddle of the Voucher*.

³⁷ RHC AC 1011 Archives, Royal Holloway, University of London – Sherman Papers: Minutes of the Education Seminar held on Monday, 27 February 1984: 1

³⁸ RHC AC 1011 RHUL Archive – Sherman Papers: Desiderata – by Caroline Cox and John Marks – 31 January 1984: 1

³⁹ THCR – Draft: The Right to Learn, 1981: 8

afford to pay for it, and the “People” who have no choice except the state comprehensive neighbourhood school because their parents cannot afford to pay. (CPSESG - Cottrell, 1982: 42)

The CPSESG referred back to the criticism of the ‘standards’ of the comprehensive system and comprehensive movement eliminating ‘in-sector’ diversity. They argued that the only alternative available to parents was the right to exit the sector. The IEA’s 1984 publication by Stanley Dennison focused on maintaining a strong independent sector as an alternative to the state monopoly of education (Dennison, 1984).

In the *Black Papers*, Stuart Sexton discussed the importance of ‘in-sector’ diversity in terms of encouraging specialisms in schools -- not just “academic specialisation” but across a range including music, dance and mathematics (Black Papers - Sexton, 1977: 87). The CPSESG also explored this idea of re-introducing greater in-sector diversity, as they believed “that there should be a greater variety of types of school” (CPSESG - Cox and Marks, 1982: 5). Similar to Sexton, the CPSESG mostly discussed this in terms of the introduction of schools with a particular curricular focus -- specialist schools (CPSESG - Andreski, 1982; CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982; CPSESG - Naylor, 1981, 1985; CPS - Taylor, 1986). The CPSESG proposals for specialist schools are explored later in this chapter (see section 4.3).

4.2 Internal Discussion: Within the Conservative Government and Department of Education and Science (DES)

This section will focus on how ideas of choice and diversity were discussed within the Conservative Government and the DES. Conservative politicians discussed the importance of a number of key ideas: improving standards in education; freedom, rights and responsibilities; and meeting the individual needs of pupils. Many of these ideas took shape in the Conservative Government proposals, and resulting policy initiatives, aimed at enhancing choice and diversity in education. The focus on enhancing choice came through most clearly in the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) and the Parents’ Charter. Politicians also discussed the usage of mechanisms for achieving parental choices such as the proposed voucher initiatives. Diversity initiatives primarily included preserving between-sector diversity through the use of the APS and increasing in-sector diversity through variety of schools.

Information collected from interviews with political advisers is again used in this section. This is also supplemented by Rhodes Boyson's memoir, *Speaking My Mind* and Margaret Thatcher's memoir, *The Downing Street Years*. Primary source material contemporaneous to the 1980s includes: House of Commons Parliamentary debates (obtained from the online archive of HCPP); political speeches including Conservative Party Conference speeches (obtained from National Archive and Conservative Party Archive); Conservative Party Manifestos for the 1979 and 1983 General Elections; DES internal memos and briefings (obtained from National Archive); and DES White Papers and Acts.

4.2.1 Raising Standards: Criticism of Comprehensive Education

The Conservative Party set out two priority areas in education going into the 1979 general election: standards in education and parents' rights and responsibilities (the latter is discussed in the next sub-section) (Conservative Party, 1979: 17-8). There were two lines of argument regarding educational standards in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto which reflected the two lines of argument in the *Black Papers* (see section 4.1.1). First, that comprehensive schools led to a decline in standards and second, that parental choice could be a remedy to the fall in standards by encouraging competition (Conservative Party, 1979: 17-8). In the first case, the Conservatives felt that: "we have a system which in the view of many of our parents and teachers too often fails" (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). They argued that the emphasis on comprehensive education meant too much focus on "structure" for ideological purposes at the cost of "quality" (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). The manifesto also noted the intention of the Conservative Government to "repeal those sections of the 1976 Education Act which compel local authorities to reorganise along comprehensive lines" (Conservative Party, 1979: 18).

The 1979 Manifesto also set out the aim of enhancing parental choice to "help raise standards by giving them greater influence over education" (Conservative Party, 1979: 18); this was also restated in the 1983 Conservative Party Manifesto.⁴⁰ In 1979, Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson echoed the same key aims for the

⁴⁰ "Giving parents more power is one of the most effective ways of raising educational standards. We shall continue to seek ways of widening parental choice and influence over their children's schooling." (Conservative Party, 1983: 29)

Conservative Government – “educational standards and parental choice” – when he outlined the “Conservative 3-point plan on educational standards” which included improving teacher training, improving attainment and extending parental influence.⁴¹ He was a *Black Paper* author and a co-editor of the final 1977 publication in which the introductory letter to MPs also suggested that standards would be improved by giving attention to pupil attainment, tackling the permissive ethos of the classroom and improving the training of teachers (Black Papers - Cox & Boyson, 1977: 8–9). He also advocated for increasing parental choice in that publication (Black Papers - Cox & Boyson, 1977: 9). It is possible to see in both the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto, and Boyson’s 1979 speech, that arguments used by the Conservative Government reflect some of the ideas set out in the *Black Papers* regarding criticism of the comprehensive system and a focus on parental choice as a means of improving standards. The similarity in arguments could have owed to the influence of Boyson himself as a *Black Paper* contributor, which indicates the possibility of ‘formal influence’ (see section 2.1; Stone, 2004) of external discussion on the internal discussion of ideas.

The politicians also expressed concern about a ‘levelling down’ in standards as a result of comprehensive education and a concern over behaviour and discipline. In 1981, Secretary of State for Education Mark Carlisle emphasised this concern about levelling down in the context of discussion about comprehensive schools and the tripartite system:

The job of the comprehensive secondary school is not just to do for some pupils what a good grammar school does and for the rest what a good secondary modern school does. Its goal if it is to be truly successful is to do more than either for every pupil.⁴²

He argued that comprehensive schools had a dual role in providing for the highest ability pupils, as would a grammar school, as well as providing for the less academic pupils, as would a secondary modern school. He argued that the standards of education should not be ‘levelled down’ but should try to address the range of abilities. In his 1979 Conservative Party Conference speech, Carlisle defined standards in terms of “standards of literacy and numeracy” as well as “standards of

⁴¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive (CPA) – PPB 154/3 – Boyson, West Midlands Area Conference 1979

⁴² CPA – CRD 4/5/15 – Carlisle, North of England Education Conference 1981: 4

behaviour and discipline in our schools”.⁴³ This concern about the comprehensive schools, in terms of both types of standards, was a line of discussion that continued into Keith Joseph’s later tenure as Secretary of State for Education, as can be seen in his first Conservative Party Conference Speech in 1981:

There is widespread concern about standards in many parts of the comprehensive system. There is concern not just about academic standards, though they are crucial, but in some parts of the country about behaviour, about discipline and about work habits. I believe that this concern, which is widespread, represents a concern for the pupils themselves as well as for society as a whole.⁴⁴

Concern over standards in behaviour and discipline in the comprehensive system was also a thread in the *Black Papers*. In his 1969 article in the second *Black Paper*, Boyson (who was Under-Secretary of State under both Carlisle and Joseph in the early 1980s) argued that “learning needs discipline” and that the comprehensive schools would need to take special care to maintain both quality and discipline (Black Papers - Boyson, 1969: 62). In the emphasis on concern about levelling down in educational standards and problems in discipline and behaviour, it is possible to see a reflection of *Black Paper* arguments in the arguments used by politicians in the first Thatcher Administration.

4.2.2 *Freedom, Rights and Responsibilities*

In 1980, Secretary of State Mark Carlisle announced at the Conservative Party Conference that the Conservative Government was opposed to reductions in provision in the independent sector proposed by the Labour Party opposition, which he argued was “a clear attack on individual freedom”.⁴⁵ For Mark Carlisle, the state must act in a way that least restricts the freedom of parents to make choices about education. This freedom should extend as far as to allow parents to access the type of school they choose, whether in the maintained or independent sector:

It is an attack on the freedom of any individual, having paid his rates and taxes, which help provide for our State system of education, nevertheless to choose to spend the rest of his money as he so wishes, including, if he so wishes, on the education of his own children.⁴⁶

⁴³ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 2/10

⁴⁴ CPA – NUA 2/1/85 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1981: 1

⁴⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/84 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 2-5

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Carlisle drew on the idea of negative liberty (see section 2.2.4; Berlin, 2002), arguing that parents must be freed from restrictions on choice in education. This shows a similarity with the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) ideas on freedom that were being developed at the time, although the official submission of their *Right to Learn* manifesto to the DES was not until 1981. The 1983 Conservative Party Manifesto did come after the CPSESG publication and stated that the next Conservative Government would “continue to return more choice to individuals and their families. That is the way to increase personal freedom” (Conservative Party, 1983: 24). In the 1983 Manifesto, the freedom to exercise choice indicated ideas of positive liberty (see section 2.2.4; Berlin, 2002).

In the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto, the aim was to enhance the role of parents in education overall, to get them to the point of activating this “right of choice”, and therefore allowing them to take greater control over the direction of education of their children (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). The Manifesto argued for the extension of both “rights and responsibilities” to empower parents in education (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). Carlisle made a stronger connection between freedom and responsibility in his political speeches. He considered who should have the rights and responsibilities for ensuring children are educated. During his tenure at the DES, he discussed the responsibility of parents in the process of educating their children:

The 1944 Education Act enshrined in legislation one of the traditionally accepted values of this country namely that the responsibility to ensure the education of a child is that of the parent and not that of the State. It follows that a parent should have the greatest possible say in the way in which his child is educated – including the right to decide, should he wish, that his child is educated in an independent rather than a maintained school.⁴⁷

If parents have the fundamental responsibility for education, he argued, then they should also be given the most flexibility, or choice, in how they exercise that responsibility. Going further, he argued that “the duty to educate a child is not the duty of the State, it is the duty of the parent”⁴⁸ and therefore parents must have a right to choice about the type of education they want. For Carlisle, the state must act in a way that least restricts the performance of this parental responsibility, or duty.

⁴⁷ CPA – CRD 4/5/15 – Carlisle, Speech to Headmasters’ Conference 1980: 1

⁴⁸ CPA – NUA 2/1/84 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 2-5

Whilst not explicitly referencing any external publications, this argument was again along similar lines to the arguments concerning parental rights and responsibilities expressed by the CPSESG in its 1981 publications (see section 4.1.2).

In 1979, Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson argued that parents know what they want from schools and that government policies to extend choice provided a way of improving school standards by increasing parental involvement.⁴⁹ He connected the idea of the responsibility parents have for their children's education to the prior discussion about improving standards. This was similar to the arguments used by the CPSESG in terms of 'empowering' parents (see section 4.1.2). In her memoir, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher discussed the change in leadership of the Number 10 Policy Unit in 1982 and her conversations with the new head of the unit Ferdinand Mount (see section 3.2.4) about the direction of policy. She noted his focus on the idea of increasing responsibility in society broadly, and they discussed a desire to "increase parental power" in education specifically (Thatcher, 1993: 278). The linkage of responsibility in education to empowerment of parents reflected ideas under discussion in the CPSESG in this period. In this case, there is a likely reason for the similarity in ideas in that Mount joined the Number 10 Policy Unit directly from being Director of the CPS (see section 3.2.4). This indicates a more likely source of 'informal influence' and potentially 'formal influence' of the CPS on the internal discussion (see section 2.1; Stone, 2004).

4.2.3 *Meeting individual needs*

The ideas of individual freedom, and individual responsibility, link to ideas about addressing the needs of the individual within education. In a 1979 speech, Secretary of State for Education Mark Carlisle emphasised the Conservative Government's commitment to "do all that is within our power to provide a system of education which meets the individual needs of every individual child".⁵⁰ For Carlisle, this meant finding ways of providing education that met a range of abilities and preferences.⁵¹ As was noted in section 4.2.1 in his 1979 Conservative Party

⁴⁹ CPA – PPB 154/3 – Boyson, West Midlands Area Conference 1979: 2: "Parents know what they want for their children's good: well-disciplined and high achieving schools, and increased parental choice of school is thus a mechanism for the improvement of school standards."

⁵⁰ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 1

⁵¹ Ibid, 11: "Each and every child must be encouraged to give of his or her best. It is only, I believe, by teaching children of different ability according to their own ability, that we shall enable them to reach the top of their own personal trees."

Conference speech, Carlisle highlighted the perceived failure of comprehensive education to cater to the wide variety of individual needs, as he argued that “all children should receive an education commensurate with their ability and their aptitude, whatever type of school they attend”.⁵² This linked to discussions in the *Black Papers* and the CPSESG about catering to individual capabilities over uniformity in education. Carlisle discussed this focus on the individual as the purpose of education and a central aim of English education: “I believe that it would be true to say that education in England has always been for the individual. Our tradition has been to develop to the full potential of the child or student.”⁵³ In order to reach a student’s full potential, he said, there must also be “a degree of variety and discernment in what is offered.”⁵⁴

In his tenure as Secretary of State for Education, Keith Joseph argued that it was only possible to meet the wide variety of individual needs under a comprehensive system if there was sufficient resourcing provided:

The only way to make non-selective schools work without penalising the average, below or above average child, or all those groups, would have been to keep the schools small so that teachers and children knew one another, to give them the right amount of skilled staff so that what the school offered was broad and at the same time sufficiently adapted to the varied needs of the children.⁵⁵

This reflected CPSESG discussion about the conservative vision for education: a flexible, individualised system allowing parents the freedom to choose what best meets their child’s individual needs. This connection between the ideas expressed by the CPSESG and Keith Joseph was representative of the formal relationship between the two, as he had been a co-founder of the CPS. Both Mark Carlisle and Keith Joseph’s criticism of the comprehensive system in both of their tenures as Education Secretary reflected the ideas of ‘differentiators’, those who believed that there were fundamental differences in pupils that must be accounted for in the education system (see section 2.2.5 and 4.1.3). Stuart Sexton, who was a political adviser during both of their turns in office, was also a strong advocate of differentiation (see section 4.1.3). Also, as noted in the last chapter (see section 3.2.1), Joseph asked all DES

⁵² CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979:2/10

⁵³ CPA – CRD 4/5/15 – Carlisle, North of England Education Conference 1981: 2

⁵⁴ Ibid., 4

⁵⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/85 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1981: 11

staff to read a CPS publication by Max Wilkinson that advocated for more differentiation in British education in line with the practice of other European countries (CPS - Wilkinson, 1977: 13–14). This indicates a more ‘formal influence’ of the external discussion on the internal discussion.

4.2.4 Parental Choice Policies: Assisted Places Scheme (APS) and the Parents’ Charter

Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle said in his 1979 Conservative Party Conference speech: “We have begun the long haul back to greater freedom in education, to greater choice for parents, and to higher standards for all.”⁵⁶ This reflected a commitment to those three issues and their influence on policy, as can be seen in his announcement of the forthcoming Conservative Government’s first substantial education bill:

The Bill will strengthen parents’ right to choose a school for their child and will require local authorities to meet that choice so far as possible. It will establish a proper local appeals procedure. It will require the publication of full details about a school so that each parent can make an informed choice. These are practical ways of advancing choice, and through choice of advancing standards. These are the things we said we would do, and these we will do.⁵⁷

The resulting 1980 Education Act introduced the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) and extended parental choice in education (see section 2.2.3); both aspects were outlined in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto to provide choice for the most able and choice for all, two ideas explored in this sub-section.

The 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto described the “Parents’ Charter” as a means of facilitating parental choice by placing “a clear duty on government and local authorities to take account of parents’ wishes when allocating children to schools” (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). The Parents’ Charter was integrated into the 1980 Education Act in that local education authorities were to accommodate as far as possible and “enable[e] the parent of child in the area of the authority to express a preference as to the school at which he wishes education to be provide for his child” (1980, ch. 20, sect. 6). In keeping with their ideas about rights and responsibilities, the Conservative Government argued that all parents should have some capability to

⁵⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 21

⁵⁷ Ibid., 22

make choices about which schools their children attend. The APS reflected ideas about choice in education in that the government partially covered tuition fees for low-income families to enable “pupils who might otherwise not be able to do so to benefit from education at independent schools” (1980, ch. 20, sect. 18). It also linked to ideas about meeting individual needs in education and providing a “ladder of opportunity”⁵⁸ for high achieving low-income pupils outside the comprehensive system. Carlisle argued that the power would be with the consumer, the user of the service, as control over the money would belong to the parents.⁵⁹ The APS was about “choice” and “opportunity”,⁶⁰ which linked to ideas about parental choice and meeting the needs of the individual. During his tenure at the DES, Keith Joseph said that the APS provided opportunities specifically for those who could take advantage by offering a ladder up, which he argued should be among “a series of social and educational ladders to all children” offered within the education system.⁶¹ There was also a clear element of criticism of the comprehensive system and the standards provided that parents needed freedom from in accessing educational services elsewhere (i.e. the independent sector). Upon joining the DES, Joseph said in praise of the 1980 Education Act, that it had “struck a notable blow for standards in education by way of parental involvement and choice.”⁶²

The first education policies set out in the 1980 Education Act highlighted the focus in the Department of Education and Science, and the 1979–1983 Conservative Government more broadly, on the right to choice and an individualised approach to education. Political adviser Stuart Sexton highlighted the key differences between the two policies: the APS (of which he was a key architect) provided choice to “some” (low-income, high-achieving pupils), and the parents’ charter element

⁵⁸ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 22: “This [The APS] will restore to bright youngsters particularly those from poorer homes, the ladder of opportunity so callously lopped away by the Labour Party when they abolished the direct-grant schools.” Conservative politicians frequently made a connection between direct grant schools (see glossary) and the APS. In his memoir, Rhodes Boyson argued that with the APS was “superior to the direct grant scheme, since it subsidizes the pupil and not the school, so the full or partial remission of fees goes only to pupils from economically poor families (Boyson, 1995: 163).”

⁵⁹ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 22: “Our schemes, which will be centrally financed, will give assistance not to schools but to parents and to children.”

⁶⁰ CPA – NUA 2/1/84 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 6: “It was to widen opportunities for all children, it was to give the widest possible parental choice, that we devised our assisted places scheme to take the place of the direct grant system...this is a major widening of choice and an opportunity consistent with our party’s philosophy.”

⁶¹ CPA – NUA 2/1/85 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1981: 12

⁶² Ibid., 11

allowed “as much as possible” choice in the system as whole.⁶³ The 1983 Conservative Party Manifesto praised the success of the 1980 Education Act; success here was defined as recognition by local authorities of parents’ choice and the APS allowing choice for the best and the brightest even outside of the maintained system (Conservative Party, 1983: 29). In her memoir, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher argued that her first administration (1979–1983) succeeded in increasing “parents’ rights in the education system” (Thatcher, 1993: 306).

4.2.5 *Choice Mechanisms: Vouchers*

As described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.4), in order to ensure that the educational system was truly responsive to parental desires, policy discussions both external to the Department of Education and Science (DES) and internally turned to how to give weight to those choices and facilitate responsiveness. When Keith Joseph became Secretary of State for Education he announced that he believed in the potential effectiveness of vouchers in promoting choice.⁶⁴ As noted earlier (see section 3.2.1), he had a strong relationship with the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which had advocated for the benefits of the voucher throughout this period (see section 4.1.4). The voucher was also an issue that his political adviser, Stuart Sexton, explored in his publication for the 1977 *Black Paper* (see section 4.1.4). It was also an issue under discussion at the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG), particularly in 1982 and 1983 (see section 4.1.4). The CPSESG reported at the CPS Annual Meeting in February 1983 (attended by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) that over the past year the CPSESG had attended regular meetings with Joseph and Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson, which were supplemented by papers on a number of education issues including vouchers.⁶⁵ At the 1982 Conservative Party Conference, Joseph argued that a combination of vouchers and open enrolment would provide a way of facilitating choice for all individuals and driving up standards:

⁶³ Sexton Interview – September 2014: “Assisted Places Scheme was to enable some children to get a place at an independent school on an income related fee. Parents’ Charter was trying to apply this idea that parents should have as much as possible similar choice between schools.”

⁶⁴ CPA – NUA 2/1/85 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1981: 12: “I have been intellectually attracted to the idea of seeing whether eventually a voucher might be a way of increasing parental choice even further...It is not as easy as that. There are very great difficulties in making a voucher deliver.”

⁶⁵ THCR 2/11/3/2 Part 2 f53 – Arrangements for Centre for Policy Studies Annual Meeting and report of the Policy Study Groups : 5

We want to extend choice to every person. That is what a properly constructed voucher scheme could do. Vouchers could create a pressure for standards to rise... I believe that if vouchers were combined with open enrolment some of the least good State schools would disappear and increased competition might galvanise the less good State schools to achieve better results.⁶⁶

Open enrolment would allow movement within the education system by providing schools with resources to expand if needed based on enrolment numbers. Joseph stated that open enrolment would “be an excellent means of increasing responsiveness to parental choice and thereby improving standards within the maintained sector.”⁶⁷ Vouchers would allow money to follow the pupil, giving an incentive for competition to drive up standards (see section 2.2.4).

The voucher was a strongly contested idea both external to the DES and internally. It received considerable criticism from within the DES from the start of Joseph’s tenure, particularly from the civil service. In a memo in response to an information request on vouchers, the Schools Branch (see glossary) showed concern about the viability of the cost of implementing such a programme and argued that what had already been introduced in the 1980 Education Act “represent[ed] the Government’s response to the pressure for increased parental involvement”.⁶⁸ A further memo was produced by the Schools Branch that expanded the exploration of the voucher scheme and highlighted some of the possibilities and issues. It argued that a full voucher scheme, including independent sector, would be too costly and that it would be near impossible to get the independent sector to implement open enrolment.⁶⁹ Further, the memo argued, a limited voucher scheme including only the maintained sector would primarily only function as open enrolment and would not provide further choice than already offered by the 1980 Education Act.⁷⁰ Finally, the memo questioned whether it was possible to reach greater satisfaction of parental choice, accountability in schools or parental involvement through a voucher scheme.⁷¹ It argued that the restrictions to achieving any of the above aims lay partially in the structure of the system, whereby there was limited capacity (in terms of school places that would be available to allow flexible transfer between schools); education

⁶⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/86 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1982: 7

⁶⁷ CPA – NUA 2/1/86 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1982: 7

⁶⁸ The National Archives (TNA) – ED 207/164 – Memo from Schools Branch I to Keith Joseph – 15 Sept 1981: 2

⁶⁹ TNA – ED 207/164 – DES Memo Education Vouchers : Some Practical Problems – Nov 1981

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

funding allocations were made by local authorities to schools (schools lacked autonomy over their own funding so there was no incentive to compete); and parents had no control over funding (systems would need to be created to allocate funds to parents under a voucher scheme).⁷² The Schools Branch also noted that a good way to get a sense for the difficulties of implementing a voucher programme was by involving external groups who were advocates of the voucher. The civil service argued that these groups could put pressure on the Secretary of State to turn against the initiative.⁷³ They recommended specifically contacting Majorie Seldon of the voucher pressure group FEVER (and the CPSESG – see sections 3.2.1 and 4.1.4) to conduct research into the difficulties of implementing the scheme.⁷⁴ In his memoir, Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson noted that Seldon did respond, along with other interest groups and voucher advocates, but that Seldon did not herself receive a response from the department (Boyson, 1995).⁷⁵ The voucher was never successfully developed as a policy in its entirety; however, many of the elements of the mechanisms of vouchers, such as demand-side, and open enrolment, could arguably be seen in later policies (see section 7.2.1).

4.2.6 *Diversity Mechanisms: Between-Sector and In-Sector*

Choice requires alternatives, and politicians aimed to provide means of addressing the individual needs of pupils through policies that enhanced diversity of provision. The idea of between-sector diversity (see section 2.2.5) has been discussed at length, with reference to the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) as a mechanism to access the diversity of provision within the independent sector. Secretary of State Mark Carlisle argued that there were benefits to building off the strengths of the existing independent sector rather than replicating the same diversity in the maintained sector and risking “poor quality”:

To our party the independent schools and the State maintained schools are part of the total educational provision of this country, a provision in which there is variety and choice, a provision in which we are concerned not with imposing a single monolithic system of education, but rather a system aimed to match the individual needs of each individual child.⁷⁶

⁷² TNA – ED 207/164 – DES Memo Education Vouchers : Some Practical Problems – Nov 1981

⁷³ TNA – ED 207/164 – DES Memo Education Vouchers, covering note from NW Stuart to Ulrich – 9 Nov 1981

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ He also noted that there were responses from the National Council for Educational Standards and “fourteen distinguished scholars” including Milton Friedman (Boyson, 1995: 165). The 1983 CPSESG publication by Anthony Flew, *Power to the People*, was also in response to the Schools Branch memo on vouchers (see section 4.1.4).

⁷⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/84 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 2-5

He argued that the two sectors were needed to provide the necessary diversity to meet individual needs, as it could not be done with a ‘one size fits all’ option.

There was also an argument for providing in-sector diversity. Under-Secretary of State for Education Rhodes Boyson argued that the increased parental choice promised by the 1980 Education Act required diversity of options available to parents: “We need to go further, away from the comprehensive monopoly, towards a diversity, both in the owning and running of schools, and in the type of schools provided.”⁷⁷ Brian Griffiths, the head of the Number 10 Policy Unit (1985–1990, see section 3.2.4), took a particular interest in education as one of his three main areas of policy focus, and also argued for more in-sector diversity.⁷⁸ Along with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher he devised a ‘10-point plan for education’ that he argued guided the Conservative Government policy in this area from the mid-1980s to late-1980s.⁷⁹ The 10-point plan included: greater devolution of responsibility to heads and governors, increased parental choice, introduction of a national curriculum, basic testing, reforming the school inspectorate (HMI) and removal of local education authority power.⁸⁰ Many of these ideas will be explored in later chapters, but choice and diversity⁸¹ were certainly key components of his vision for education:

It was really a view of... three things, giving parents greater choice, creating different kinds of schools, and thirdly ensuring there was quality control in the whole process. And it was fundamentally an attempt to open up the whole of education.⁸²

He argued that the aim of increasing diversity was best met through variety in the type of school available in the maintained sector. This idea was explored substantially externally within think tanks, and internally within the government during this period, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter (see section 4.3).

⁷⁷ TNA – ED 207/159 – Boyson, Luncheon at Bell Hotel 1982:3

⁷⁸ Griffiths Interview –September 2014

⁷⁹ Griffiths Interview –September 2014

⁸⁰ Ibid. (Interviewee could only remember 7 of the 10 and no alternative supporting documents have been found)

⁸¹ Ibid., on 10 point for education: “Secondly, there should be greater parental choice, so parents should be allowed to be able to choose schools outside of the narrow local education authority in which they lived. Thirdly, there should be different kinds of schools, and people were talking about city technology colleges, but the one that I put so much effort into was grant maintained schools.”

⁸² Ibid.

4.3 Case Study of Diversity: Specialist Schools

As noted in both the external and internal discussions, one of the mechanisms for increasing diversity to facilitate choice was to extend the options available within the state sector. There were a number of variations on proposals in this period from both think tanks and the Conservative Government. This section is a type of case study in mechanisms of diversity that compares these different proposals and how they relate to those discussed in the rest of the chapter. The first sub-section looks at the details of the external proposals. The second sub-section looks at the details of the internal proposals. These sub-sections parallel each other to show commonalities and differences. And finally, the last sub-section examines the internal government discussion that existed on all the proposals. This section in particular provides an opportunity to show in a case study the movement of external to internal ideas by showing clear evidence of the government response to external and internal proposals.

From 1981–1986 five different models were proposed to increase in-sector diversity, but the aims and objectives for each were broadly similar. The proposals were aimed at increasing in-sector diversity by introducing a number of state maintained schools with specific curriculum specialisations. The proposals differed in the types of curricular specialisations they offered but the range of possible specialist schools included mathematics, science and computing; technical; humanities; language; business and commercial; art, music and drama; and physical education. Three proposals came from the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and two of those from within the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group. Two other proposals were introduced by consecutive Under-Secretaries of State within the Department of Education and Science (DES).

4.3.1 External Proposals: By Right Leaning Interest Groups

The three proposals from interest groups external to government were all from the CPS. The first proposal came from the CPSESG in 1981 calling for the creation of ‘specialist comprehensives’. Caroline Cox and John Marks, chairman and secretary of the group respectively (see section 3.2.1), authored the proposal which was intended specifically for distribution to policymakers. The second proposal also came from the CPSESG in April 1985, authored by Fred Naylor, a CPSESG

member as well as later research fellow for the CPS (see section 3.2.1), and was published for a wide audience including politicians. The final proposal came as a result of the CPS conference on employment held on 31st of January 1986 (attended by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and other politicians); Cyril Taylor authored the publication (a CPS director and later adviser to Kenneth Baker -- see section 2.5.3), which was produced in May 1986 for a wide audience including politicians.

In their proposal, Cox and Marks wanted to develop existing comprehensive schools to act as “centres of excellence within the state system”.⁸³ In his proposal, Taylor used similar language to describe the impact of his proposed schools in that they would “serve as a beacon to other schools in the area” (CPS - Taylor, 1986: 30). Cox and Marks argued that the intention was that their proposed schools would drive other schools to improve their standards:

A policy initiative along the lines we suggest – *setting up centres of excellence within the state system* -- would, once it started, be likely to spread. Once a reasonable number of schools had been designated as specialist comprehensives parental demand would be likely to grow and other schools would not want to be left out. And this initiative would help to strengthen state schools and make them more able to compete more effectively with independent schools. It would thus help to reduce the current gap between the Two Nations in our education system.⁸⁴

Cox and Marks drew on a number of different elements from the larger discussion of choice and diversity in this period, including a concern about standards in the comprehensive system (4.1.1) and creating a system responsive to parental demand that would encourage competition amongst schools (4.1.2). Cox and Marks argued that many comprehensive schools had already naturally developed areas where they excelled which could be enhanced to be the school’s overall specialism. They proposed schools with a wide range of specialisms including mathematics, technology, humanities, language, business, the arts and physical education.⁸⁵ Both Naylor and Taylor proposed specific schools that focused on technical education (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985; CPS - Taylor, 1986). They both advocated for the creation of new schools tailored specifically for this specialism (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985; CPS - Taylor, 1986).

⁸³ TNA – ED 207/159 – Proposal by Caroline Cox and John Marks, 1981: 1

⁸⁴ TNA – ED 207/159 – Cox and Marks Proposal, 1981: 4

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1

The authors linked their proposals to other models of specialist education both domestically (past and contemporaneous) and internationally. Cox and Marks referenced existing schools with specialisms in music and dance (though all the examples were from the independent sector). Interestingly, the authors also made multiple parallels to the diversity of provision under the tripartite system (see section 2.2.1) as a justification for potential success of their proposed specialist schools. Naylor referenced the technical schools of the tripartite era as models of technology-focused specialist schools in the English context (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985: 62). The authors also referenced international models as justification for the effectiveness of these proposed specialist schools and the potential benefits. Cox and Marks justified their proposal based on the success of magnet schools in the USA.⁸⁶ German technical schools also served as the primary reference point for the discussions about technical schools in Naylor's proposal (see section 5.2) (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985). His publication was also comparative in its focus looking at four different countries and their approach to technical education: England and Wales; West Germany; the USA; and the USSR (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985).

In Cox and Marks' proposal the schools would have a clear specialism but "they would also offer a core curriculum to enable pupils to benefit from a good general education in other subjects";⁸⁷ Taylor's proposal suggested a similar arrangement. The relationship between coverage of specialist subjects and broader curricular areas is discussed in more detail in section 5.2. Cox and Marks also argued that the "schools would also provide much more effective foci for curriculum development".⁸⁸ This showed another way these schools were envisioned as 'centres of excellence'; these specialist schools would set the benchmarks in terms of standards, practices and content. Cox and Marks argued that the schools would be for all ability levels, but with separate levels in the specialism area; this linked to the larger criticism of the comprehensive system not being able to meet the variety of individual educational needs, and to arguments for 'setting' noted earlier in this chapter (see section 4.1.3). Cox and Marks strongly advocated a system of flexible transfer to allow pupils to enter the schools at multiple points (rather than a fixed

⁸⁶ TNA – ED 207/159 – Minutes from meeting between Cox, Pollard, Marks, Letwin, Joseph and PM – 12 Mar 1985: 1

⁸⁷ TNA – ED 207/159 – Cox and Marks Proposal, 1981: 1

⁸⁸ Ibid., 2-3

entry at a specific age).⁸⁹ The specialist models proposed by Cox and Marks were aimed at addressing specific interests and subject aptitudes (see section 4.1.3). The authors were strongly against needing to be uniform in terms of the number of schools located in any given area.⁹⁰ Taylor argued in his proposal that an urban environment was the best location for his technical schools (CPS - Taylor, 1986: 30). He also argued that the schools should be “adapted to local needs and conditions”, which in theory local authorities would have already done; particular emphasis was given to the role of employers and their involvement in schools (CPS - Taylor, 1986: 30, see section 5.2.2).

One of the underlying issues in these proposals was a distrust of the local authorities to support the establishment and development of these specialist schools. This linked to criticism of local authorities to provide diversity in the state education sector and to be responsive to the needs of the consumers (see section 4.1.2). Cox and Marks argued that one of the essential barriers to implementation of their proposal was the fact that “the Secretary of State has no power to set up schools”, which meant that “the establishment of specialist comprehensive schools will have to be encouraged by indirect means”.⁹¹ The suggested indirect means to establish these schools they noted were guarantees of specialist staff and capital grants to finance the specialist facilities.⁹² Particularly with the technical schools, there was a strong desire to find ways to involve employers in the creation of the schools (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985: 6; CPS - Taylor, 1986: 30).

4.3.2 Internal Proposals: Within the Department of Education and Science (DES)

There were also two proposals for schools with a particular curricular specialism from consecutive Under-Secretaries of State for Education: Rhodes Boyson and Bob Dunn. Boyson’s 1982 proposal was for ‘specialist schools’. It was first sent in an internal department memo to Secretary of State Keith Joseph on 11th of August 1982. His proposal followed Caroline Cox and John Marks’ proposal but did not reference it. As was noted in section 4.2, the CPSESG did have a number of meetings in this period both with Boyson and Joseph; therefore, it is likely that he

⁸⁹ TNA – ED 207/159 – Cox and Marks Proposal, 1981: 1

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 3

⁹² Ibid., 4

was at least familiar with Cox and Marks' proposal. Dunn's proposal was introduced in 1985 for 'technology-plus schools', right before Fred Naylor's publication on technology schools. It was also first sent in an internal memo to Joseph, on the 12th of March 1985.

In his model, Boyson, like Cox and Marks, argued that these schools would be centres of excellence and would be effective at "influencing the general schools in the area as well".⁹³ He also had a clear goal to raise standards within the state education system, but also to tackle the perceived 'uniformity' of the period of comprehensivisation. Boyson also suggested that the schools would have a range of specialisms, whereas Dunn's proposal focused specifically on schools with a technical focus. As with Naylor and Taylor, Dunn emphasised a great need for specifically technical education.⁹⁴

As happened with the external proposals, Boyson and Dunn linked their proposals to other models of specialist education both domestically (past and contemporaneous) and internationally. Similar to Cox and Marks, Boyson also noted existing schools with arts specialisms. He argued that the effectiveness of these schools was a result of the concentration of pupils with similar ability levels and motivation in schools with the correct resources, teachers and timetable.⁹⁵ One issue that is not sufficiently addressed in these proposals is the role that existing aptitude plays in the success of these arts-focused schools (i.e. was student aptitude a reason for the success of the arts-focused schools; would it be a requirement for future schools). The internal DES proposals also referenced the previous models of the tripartite era. Boyson stated that grammar schools could be argued to be a model for early specialist schools as they provided a more specialist selection of the curriculum for the highest achieving pupils.⁹⁶ Similarly, Dunn used early technical schools as the basis for his schools, in which he argued that they would be technology-plus schools in that they would do more than the older technical schools. Dunn also noted a range of international examples of specialist schools in his proposal:

⁹³ TNA – ED 207/159 – The Development of Specialist Schools proposal by Rhodes Boyson, 1982: 6

⁹⁴ TNA – ED 207/159 – Technology-Plus Schools proposal by Bob Dunn, 1985: 1

⁹⁵ TNA – ED 207/159 – Boyson Proposal, 1982

⁹⁶ Ibid.

The ‘Special Schools’ in the USA have a bias towards scientific and technical studies...there are the ‘Mass Schools with Special Profile’ of the USSR and, of course, similar schools are maintained in Japan and West Germany.⁹⁷

He also noted that Cox had been circulating papers about magnet schools in the USA in this period, which indicates further intermingling of the different ideas between external and internal discussion.

In terms of content, both Boyson’s and Dunn’s models had clear specialisms but would also give attention in the curriculum to broader subject areas; it was the addition of the broad curricular element that led to Dunn’s name for his proposal – ‘technology-plus schools’.⁹⁸ The proposals mentioned the multiple benefits of specialist schools to the wider state sector wherein the curriculum specialisation of a school would create “resource centres”⁹⁹ for examining curriculum. Both of these elements are similar to the Cox and Marks proposal. The quality of the specialist subject would be further enhanced, according to Boyson, by concentrating the most able students and teachers in these specialist areas into one space, building off the success of past models such as the performing arts schools.¹⁰⁰ The authors all argued that this concentration of aptitudes and resourcing would allow the development of quality in a subject not normally possible in a comprehensive setting that catered to all abilities; they thus linked to the larger criticism of the comprehensive system noted earlier in this chapter (see sections 4.2.3). As with Cox and Marks’ model, Boyson and Dunn both proposed flexible transfer into the schools at multiple ages. They also advocated for some form of selection-based entry if demand for places exceeded those available (selection based on pupil capability or motivation to engage in the education offered by the school). There is an interesting contradiction at the heart of these models, where the schools should be designed for all abilities, for a range of pupil capacities, but at the same time were reserved for students who had already shown an aptitude or ability in the subject. Both models were looking for pupils with subject-specific aptitude (similar to Cox and Marks). Boyson, like Cox and Marks, felt that there was no need for uniform placement of schools in different local authorities. Both Boyson and Dunn felt that an urban environment

⁹⁷ TNA – ED 207/159 – Dunn Proposal, 1985: 1

⁹⁸ Ibid., 2

⁹⁹ TNA – ED 207/159 – Boyson Proposal, 1982: 6

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2

was the best location for introduction of the various schools, as the demands were greater and the capacity to have a flourishing diversified sector was much greater. The authors also argued that specialist schools could be tailored to needs of communities and local employers.

As was noted in section 4.3.1, Dunn was concerned about the role of local authorities in implementing the technology-plus schools:

That local education authorities have the power, but not the duty, to create schools that are run and organised on the basis of a technical or business-linked curriculum, is a fact, but very few schools are organised or are likely to be organised along such lines. Further, very few local education authorities are likely to provide such schools.¹⁰¹

This linked to criticism of local authorities for not doing enough to provide diversity in the state education sector or to be responsive to the needs of the community (see Chapter 6). Allowing schools more autonomy over their own funding was a key aspect of Dunn's proposal. His proposal also included the establishment of a centralised trust to distribute funds directly to the schools:

In order to eliminate local education authority control, and to obtain the consent of the business community, whilst such schools would be funded by the taxpayer, such grants as were dispensed would be through the medium of a national education trust.¹⁰²

The funds for this trust would come directly from the DES, rather than local authorities (see Chapter 6).¹⁰³ Particularly with the technical schools, there was a strong desire to find ways to involve employers in the running and later the funding of the schools. In Boyson's proposal he argued for employer involvement in particular with scientific and technical schools:

I would encourage a very close co-operation with local industry wherever possible, and even with industry many miles away. I believe firms would be only too willing to co-operate with such highly specialised schools, rather as the best of the university departments and polytechnics find co-operation today with particular firms.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ TNA – ED 207/159 – Dunn Proposal, 1985: 1

¹⁰² Ibid., 2

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ TNA – ED 207/159 – Boyson Proposal, 1982: 5

The involvement of employers also entered into Dunn's proposal by having "major interest in the business world" involved in the trust of running the schools¹⁰⁵ (see Chapters 5 and 6).

4.3.3 Internal Discussion on the Proposals

There are records of the Department of Education and Science (DES) response to both Caroline Cox and John Marks' proposal and Bob Dunn's technology-plus schools proposal. These archival materials show how the civil service (namely the Schools Branch), Secretary of State Keith Joseph, and to some degree Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher responded to the proposed schools. The files located did not show the response to Rhodes Boyson's proposal. The government's response to Fred Naylor's and Cyril Taylor's technical school proposals was never explicit, but will be discussed later in Chapter 7 during discussion of the creation of the CTCs (see section 7.2.2). There seemed to be some common critiques of all the models by the civil service: concern that schools had too narrow a curriculum, or specialism, at the point of entry into secondary school; doubt about the ability of these schools to recruit enough specialist teachers; scepticism about the transferability of other models of specialism used in the independent sector; and concern about the resourcing of the schools, in particular how funding would operate.

Discussion of Specialist Comprehensives – 1981–82¹⁰⁶

Cox and Mark's specialist schools proposal was brought into discussion at the DES in December 1981. Joseph asked senior civil servant Walter Ulrich to have the Schools Branch put together a briefing on the proposal.¹⁰⁷ In 1982, the Schools Branch drafted a response. The Schools Branch made it clear in the cover memo that this was not the first time the issue had been put forward to Joseph.¹⁰⁸ The civil service rejected the proposal, stating that specialist schools were a particular area of interest for Joseph and one that if given support could result in policy discussion being "side-tracked onto this largely peripheral issue [specialist schools]".¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁵ TNA – ED 207/159 – Dunn Proposal, 1985: 2

¹⁰⁶ TNA – ED 207/159 – Schools Branch I response to Cox and Marks proposal, 1982

¹⁰⁷ TNA – ED 207/159 – Letter Shaw to Ulrich – Specialist Comprehensive Schools – 22 Dec 1981: Secretary of State wanted to discuss Specialist Comprehensive Schools proposal.

¹⁰⁸ TNA – ED 207/159 – Memo Stuart to Ulrich on Specialist Comprehensive Schools – 4 Mar 1982: "While the paper seeks in some respect to develop ideas which you have already expressed to the Secretary of State in a minute on this subject of 18 November 1981, we have certainly not made a quantum leap in terms of the analysis of this subject."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

civil service expressed their concern about the introduction of a large-scale programme with limited prior experience of these types of schools, particularly in the state sector. The civil service expressed concern over premature specialisation (narrowing of curriculum options at point of entry), particularly as the only UK models referenced were music schools. They also argued that the lack of demand from parents indicated a lack of need:

That parents have not expected a demand for parallel provision in other fields [beyond music] seems to reflect the consensus that a broadly-based curriculum is the best preparation for children facing multiple career and life opportunities. The risk of premature specialisation has been highlighted of late by the rapidly changing patterns of employment.¹¹⁰

The Schools Branch argued that the lack of demand indicated parental satisfaction with the link between school-based curriculum and employment. They argued that specialisation could actually be detrimental to the pupil's ability to adapt to changes in the job market; this tension over aims and purposes of education in the preparation of pupils for later life is discussed in Chapter 5.

The Schools Branch noted the potential value of concentrating resources to improve a few schools rather than all schools. They argued, however, that this concept could only go so far, as “a central prop of the Government's policy on the school curriculum is that every pupil should pursue a broad range of study up to the age of 16”.¹¹¹ The Schools Branch cautioned against allowing the general quality of education to slip in order to accommodate specialism:

Within a specialist school it would be unacceptable if general subjects were neglected for the sake of achieving outstanding quality in the school's chosen specialism; nor should the specialist schools draw off resources and talent to the extent that other schools are unable to make adequate provision for their pupils in the specialist subject involved.¹¹²

The Schools Branch also criticised the potential drain on resources from other state sector schools that could result from the implementation of specialist schools. They discussed this particularly in terms of specialist teachers (as well as in terms of potential funds) which would be concentrated in specialist schools which “might be at the expense of other schools”.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ TNA – ED 207/159 – Schools Branch I response to Cox and Marks proposal, 1982: 1

¹¹¹ Ibid., 2

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Looking at issues of choice and diversity, the Schools Branch was concerned about the potential selectivity of the schools. The argued that “identifying subject-specific aptitudes”¹¹⁴ at an early age was in keeping with much of the discussion surrounding selectivity. The Schools Branch argued that geography would limit the number of areas that could support a variety of different schools in terms of pupil numbers, as “only large centres of population with good transport facilities could sustain a group of specialist schools with a flexible system of transfer”.¹¹⁵ The Schools Branch argued that the diversity noted in the proposal was the result of subject strengths within the existing schools which would be difficult to stimulate externally.

Renewed Interest in Specialist Comprehensives – 1985

The idea of specialist comprehensives was brought back under discussion in 1985 in a series of meetings between Caroline Cox, John Marks and Secretary of State Keith Joseph as well as through meetings and correspondence with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In the March 1985 meeting, Cox raised the potential benefits of specialist schools once again as ‘centres of excellence’ which could cover a range of subjects. Thatcher was supportive of this concept and held the view that “every child should have a good basic general education though there was no reason why this should not be combined with specialisation too”.¹¹⁶ More thought and discussion with Joseph was recommended. In preparation for the second meeting, the civil service was directed to provide another brief on the issue.¹¹⁷

The brief prepared by the civil service outlined two possible approaches to the implementation of specialist comprehensive schools: the gradualist and radical.¹¹⁸ In the gradualist approach, the impetus for the implementation would come from LEAs and governors of voluntary schools. In this approach, select comprehensives in certain areas would be encouraged to specialise; they would become centres of excellence, bringing in subject-specific teachers, providing schools with additional resources, utilising existing admissions arrangements and operating as resource

¹¹⁴ TNA – ED 207/159 – Schools Branch I response to Cox and Marks proposal, 1982: 3

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ TNA – ED 207/159 – Letter from Mark Addison to Elizabeth Hodgkinson – Minutes of meeting between PM, Cox, Pollard, Marks, Joseph and Letwin – 12 Mar 1985: 1

¹¹⁷ TNA – ED 207/159 – Memo Capey to Trundle – Prime Minister’s Meeting with Lady Cox: Follow Up, 18 Mar 1985

¹¹⁸ TNA – ED 207/159 – Briefing on Specialist Comprehensive Schools - 1985: 1

centres for the whole area.¹¹⁹ The radical approach was similar, “except that the schools would be intended to cater mainly for those pupils who showed a particular aptitude or ability in the subject area concerned.”¹²⁰ This would also entail new admissions arrangements. The civil service objected to implementation of either approach based on relatively similar ground to past objections: concern over the existing government requirements for schools to deliver broad-based education, issues of equality of access for all students to resources in specialist areas, concern over early specialism, difficulty in identifying subject aptitude or ability at a young age, and difficulty with maintaining diversity in non-urban areas.¹²¹ Further, the civil service highlighted concerns about selection by ability and its impact on the reality of parental choice and flexibility of transfer as well as the reliance in either approach on local authorities and governors to implement.¹²²

In the April 1985 follow-up meeting with Marks and Arthur Pollard (also of the CPSESG), Joseph stated that he wanted to focus on the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) as a means of enhancing technical education and vocational preparation (see sections 2.3.3 and 5.3):

The prospect of concentration of effort had some attraction, but the Secretary of State wished to improve the provision of technical and vocational specialisms as widely as possible, and to eradicate teacher shortages rather than to concentrate the efforts of existing specialist teachers into a number of focal schools.¹²³

Despite Marks’ suggestion that the schools would act as centres of focus for best practice, Joseph felt that a barrier to the implementation of the programme was a shortage of teachers in specialist subjects. In later correspondence with Cox in the summer of 1985, Thatcher restated the same views on TVEI and teacher shortages as well as an additional focus on ensuring quality standards for all abilities:

At this stage, I cannot really go beyond what Keith has already told your colleagues. I would emphasise, however, the essential message of the White Paper, “Better Schools” – that the Government’s principal aim for maintained schools – as for all sectors of education – are to raise standards at all levels of ability and to secure the best possible return from the resources

¹¹⁹ TNA – ED 207/159 – Briefing on Specialist Comprehensive Schools – 1985: 1

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.2

¹²² Ibid., p.3

¹²³ TNA – ED 207/159 – Minutes of meeting between Joseph, Marks and Pollard – 23 Apr 1985: 1

which are made available. We certainly do not intend to rule out anything that could assist us to secure those essential objectives.¹²⁴

This statement reflected some of the critiques of the policy stated by the Schools Branch in earlier periods and reinforced concern over ensuring a broad education up to a certain age; however, it also left open the possibility of a less selective option.

Discussion of Technology-Plus Schools – 1985–86

Despite the rejection of specialist schools proposals earlier in 1985, Secretary of State Keith Joseph asked civil servants to review Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's technology-plus proposal.¹²⁵ The Schools Branch disagreed with Dunn's basic rationale for the schools, which was that the schools needed to: develop pupil economic awareness, encourage engineering students, increase business and technology knowledge, and improve links between schools and businesses.¹²⁶ The Schools Branch argued that the schools as proposed would not reach a large enough number of students or be capable of comprehensively addressing the needs stated by Dunn in the rationale for the schools (which is interesting given the same could be said of the CTCs given the small number of schools – see chapter 7).¹²⁷ The main thrust of Dunn's proposal was the most strongly criticised by the civil service:

The main justification for technology-plus schools would presumably have to be that they would provide an education that both attracted pupils of the highest ability into this area of work, and equipped them uniquely well for future careers as leading technologists or businessmen.¹²⁸

The Schools Branch's critique of Dunn's policy shared many similarities with its earlier criticism of specialist schools: difficulty of determining subject aptitude at an early age, whether TVEI already served this purpose, and concern about specialising too early and limiting career options.¹²⁹ The Schools Branch further questioned whether there was "any evidence that business believes that technology-plus schools would make a significant contribution to shortages of skilled manpower".¹³⁰ They argued that there was nothing that they were aware of and that historical projects in

¹²⁴ TNA – ED 207/159 – Letter from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Lady Cox – 4 Sept 1985: 1-2

¹²⁵ TNA – ED 207/159 – Memo from R.L. Smith to Summers on Technology-Plus Schools – 24 Nov 1985

¹²⁶ TNA – ED 207/159 – School Branch III response to Technology-Plus Schools proposal – Dec 1985: 1

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 2

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

specialism (such as grammar schools) were “no more successful in producing technologists and entrepreneurs than today”.¹³¹

The technology-plus proposal was then discussed in a meeting with Dunn, Joseph and key civil servants in March 1986:

It was agreed that a central element in the discussion was whether a desirable objective was the generalisation of the TVEI, or that generalisation with the addition of some new specialised technology schools.¹³²

Dunn suggested technology schools could be a way of opening up geographic areas to the idea of TVEI. As before there was concern about the specialisation of the schools compromising the aim of breadth of education set out by in other government policy documents:

The Secretary of State wondered whether breadth in technology plus schools could be maintained by a more effective use of the curriculum or through lengthening the school day”¹³³

The civil servants argued that schools which were already successful in technology or with TVEI could be technology-plus schools with a broader curriculum. It was agreed that such examples would be gathered for future consideration. In terms of funding, support from industry was suggested by Joseph.¹³⁴ Further discussion on all issues was agreed once further examples of the existing technology curriculum in schools were gathered. As a result of Joseph’s departure from the DES no additional discussions seem to have taken place.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to address part of research question 1 – how did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science, with regard to choice and diversity. The chapter was divided into external and internal discussion, each with parallel sub-sections to show similarity of language and argument.

¹³¹ TNA – ED 207/159 – School Branch III response to Technology-Plus Schools proposal – Dec 1985: 1

¹³² TNA – ED 207/159 – Minutes of Secretary of State’s Meeting to Discuss Technology-Plus Schools – 12 Mar 1986: 1

¹³³ Ibid., 2

¹³⁴ Ibid., 3

One of the areas of discussion, both externally and internally, focused on concerns about standards in education and a criticism of the comprehensive system. There were parallels between the combination of arguments used in the *Black Papers*, the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto and a 1979 speech by Rhodes Boyson. The arguments were first, that the imposition of the comprehensive system led to a decline in education standards and second, that parental choice could be a remedy to the fall in standards by incentivising competition among schools. Another key area of discussion in this period concerned freedom, rights and responsibilities. Secretary of State Mark Carlisle discussed the importance of protecting individual freedom from the uniformity of comprehensive education as well as the individuals' rights to make their own decisions about education, which he linked to individual responsibility. The idea that parents should be empowered users with responsibility for choices in education was also discussed by the CPSESG, which then had parallels to the education focus of the No. 10 Policy Unit under Ferdinand Mount, who came directly to his position from the CPS. Discussion also focused on ideas of how well education meets the individual needs of pupils. The *Black Papers* and the CPSESG discussed concern over the impact of an all-ability teaching model on differing abilities, which was also an argument referenced by Carlisle. Additionally, in both of their tenures as Secretary of State, Carlisle and Joseph referred to ideas of differentiation in which state based education sought to address the differing needs of pupils. This was a theme of the *Black Papers*, particularly in the form of setting and streaming, which was advocated by Stuart Sexton, who was policy adviser to both Carlisle and Joseph. It was also a theme in early CPSESG publications and in a CPS publication that Joseph asked members of his department to read when he joined the DES.

The usage of the vouchers as a means of facilitating parental choice was also a key theme of the discussion of choice and diversity. The voucher was a particular area of interest for Joseph and an issue discussed extensively before this period by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and during this period by the CPSESG. Finally, in internal memos concerning the feasibility of the voucher, the Schools Branch recommended turning to Marjorie Seldon (of the CPSESG and FEVER, as well as wife of the IEA director) for research on the possible implementation issues surrounding the voucher, in order to influence Joseph's thinking on this issue. There

was also extensive discussion of the types of diversity that should be introduced, and the potential impact of these on facilitating parental choice. The case study at the end of this chapter focused on in-sector diversity, which showed similarity between the ideas discussed externally in the CPSESG and internally in the DES. Caroline Cox and John Marks of the CPSESG drafted a proposal for schools with specific curricular specialisms; this proposal was then circulated to the DES. Later that year Rhodes Boyson drafted a proposal for a similar type of school. The two proposals had a number of similar elements: desire to establish centres of excellence and curricular knowledge, broad curricular bases but with specialist focus, flexible transfer into the schools at multiple points, and an intention to admit pupils with specific subject aptitude. The similarity of ideas indicates informal influence. The similarity of timing between the renewed advocacy of Cox and Marks' proposal in 1985 with the creation of proposals on specifically technology focused schools both within the DES by Bob Dunn, and shortly after by Fred Naylor in the CPSESG, indicates a coalescence around the idea of schools with specialist curricular focus in this period. There were also detailed responses from the civil service on at least Cox and Marks' and Dunn's proposals, as well as separate meetings on each proposal with Joseph in this period. This also indicates formal influence of external interests on the internal discussion.

5. Aims and Purposes of Education

Introduction

This chapter examines how ideas about the aims and purposes of education were discussed between 1979 and 1986. Chapter 5 draws on historical data supplemented by interviews to answer research question 1 with regard to aims and purposes of education: how did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science? In order to better understand the different aims and purposes discussed in this chapter, the first section outlines a framework which links to aspects covered in Chapter 2 particularly section 2.3. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 explore the external and internal discussion of these aims and purposes in turn, highlighting similarities in language and argument as well as clear examples of formal connections. Chapter 5 also uses a mix of historical data and interviews to address research question 2 with regard to aims and purposes of education: what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas? Section 5.4 connects the ideas discussed in the rest of the chapter with agendas of key actors, specifically Under-Secretary of State for Education Bob Dunn, and Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker. In particular, this section focuses on their interests in the content of education broadly and technology specifically.

5.1 Contextualising the Aims and Purposes of Education

This section provides a framework for examining the aims and purposes of education according to conservatives, which will be explored in both the internal and external discussions in this chapter. This framework provides a way of thinking about the aims and purposes of education: what is education trying to achieve. This can be most clearly seen by looking at the social and economic purposes of education. These purposes also link to neo-conservative ideas about the control and order of society, and neo-liberal ideas about the role of the market. The framework used in this chapter builds on the frameworks of Dale (1989), Bradford (1995) and Crick (2000), which were discussed earlier in this thesis (see section 2.3).

Social purposes of education related to the idea of education serving the public (Dale, 1989a) or national interest (Bradford, 1995); these social purposes also

related to the creation of good (Crick, 2000; Dale, 1989a) or conforming (Bradford, 1995) citizens, who are moral, obey the law and engage in civic responsibility. The social purpose of education for conservatives was then to create good, conforming citizens vested with civic responsibility. For conservatives, it was essential that state education had the 'right ethos'; conservatives were concerned with school standards and with ensuring education prepared pupils to be good citizens. Conservatives felt that education should help pupils obtain the necessary knowledge to take part in the civic life of the country through an understanding of the 'shared heritage' and 'common culture'. In order to ensure this understanding, the school curriculum needed to instil values and morals into pupils to create 'good adult citizens'. The state was responsible for ensuring the content of education served the right purpose, according to conservatives. The purpose of education for conservatives was also to support the development of pupils into good adult citizens via a traditional liberal curriculum; this meant instilling in pupils the correct skills and knowledge to succeed in adult society.

The economic aims of education relate to the idea of education serving the national interest (Dale, 1989a) by creating 'good workers'. The pupil was the raw material and the curriculum focused on developing the nation's human resources by improving the skills and capabilities of all pupils, through a more vocational form of education. For conservatives, the purpose of education was to ensure the country's economic competitiveness and ensure that the needs of industry were met in terms of a skilled and trained workforce. Rising youth unemployment and a perceived deficiency by employers about the workplace skills of school graduates were issues that persisted throughout the 1980s. According to conservatives, the state was responsible for ensuring that the content of education prepared pupils with the necessary exposure to work and technical education to serve industry and society. Economic purposes of education focused on the creation of 'good adult workers'. The economic purpose of education for conservatives was to ensure pupils were prepared to be 'flexible' and 'adaptable' in the changing world of work. Secondary education in particular, conservatives felt, should provide pupils with the necessary skills to thrive in the workplace. Conservative discussion centred on what pupils needed to succeed in the world of work, including basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and attitudes of 'self-reliance' and 'motivation'.

5.2 External Discussions: By right leaning interest groups

The views in this section come from conservative educationalists from a number of think tanks: the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) (and its Education Study Group (CPSESG)), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), the Social Affairs Unit (SAU), and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI). It also includes the views of contributors to the *Black Papers* and members of pressure groups like the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Hillgate Group. To provide context to the analysis, this section relies on information collected from interviews with political advisers (the author conducted these interviews thirty years after the events discussed). All other material included in this section is primary source material: publications from the various groups (in-text citations include information about interest group authorship); the *Black Papers*; and archival material from the CPS (archival sources are footnoted).

5.2.1 Social Aims

This sub-section looks at ideas about the aims of education that have a social focus: concern about the progressive ethos and the politicisation of education, the shared heritage and common culture, the knowledge and skills pupils needed to access the common culture, and the transmission of moral standards and values.

When *Black Paper* authors discussed the perceived ‘crisis’ in education (see section 4.1.1), they were concerned about the progressive ethos of the classroom. They were concerned not only with secondary education, but with all tiers of education. One key area of concern was about the underlying assumptions about the purpose of education that they felt had come to dominate in the 1960s and 1970s. They argued that “an urgent reappraisal is required of the assumptions on which ‘progressive’ ideas... are based” (Black Papers - Cox & Dyson, 1969: 6). The *Black Paper* authors were particularly concerned with the ‘permissive’ educational ethos that they felt prevented pupils from receiving education in the basics. The membership of the CPSESG was also concerned about the influence of ‘egalitarianism’ and ‘socialism’ on the content of education (see section 4.1.1). The CPSESG concern related particularly to the issue of the ‘politicisation of education’ through the school curriculum (CPSESG - Flew, 1984). One of the main issues for the group was the “political indoctrination carried out under the guise of ‘peace studies’” (CPS, 1985:

10). Caroline Cox and John Marks, Chairman and Secretary of the CPSESG respectively, brought this issue forward on a number of occasions to both Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Secretary of State for Education Keith Joseph throughout the early to mid-1980s.¹³⁵

SAU members also condemned the types of subjects that were being taught in schools in this period; they were critical of the fashionable trends in education that “hold ephemeral sway” (SAU - O’Keeffe, 1986: 12). Like the CPSESG, and partly as a result of interlinking memberships, in the SAU publication *The Wayward Curriculum*, the group showed concern over the emergence of “political education”, “peace studies” and “education against racism” (SAU - Flew, 1986; Marks, 1986; Parkins, 1986; Partington, 1986; Scruton, 1986). In *The Wayward Curriculum*, the SAU was highly critical of the ‘newer subjects’ that were being offered in schools, which included the aforementioned subjects as well as urban studies and women’s studies. The Hillgate Group was similarly condemning of the politicisation of education in their manifesto, with particular regard to anti-racism curriculum and peace studies (Hillgate Group, 1986). All the groups were concerned with the content of education that pupils received. They wanted to ensure that what was being taught was compatible with the conservative vision of the correct content to create good citizens.

The *Black Paper* authors argued that school-based education should “be particularly concerned with transmitting the heritage of reason on which civilisation is founded” (*Black Papers* - Dyson, 1969: 78). This aim of education was also used by the CPSESG, who argued that education was about “the introduction of children into our cultural heritage and into the adult world through which this heritage is transmitted” (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982: 13). Promoting this idea of a shared cultural heritage was one of the early goals the Chairman of the CPS, Hugh Thomas, had for the CPSESG in its founding,¹³⁶ and it was a repeated theme throughout CPSESG publications (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982; Flew, 1984; Naylor, 1985). The *Black Paper* authors and the CPSESG members envisioned an educational ethos

¹³⁵ National Archives (NA) – ED 207/159 – “Letter from Mark Addison to Elizabeth Hodgkinson” – 12 March 1985 and “Minutes of Secretary of State’s Meeting with Dr Marks and Professor Pollard” – 23 April 1985

¹³⁶ RHC AR CPS/LMPC/11 RHUL Archive – Sherman Papers: Memo from Hugh Thomas to Alfred Sherman: Education Study Group – 28/06/79: 1

that conveyed their view of traditions and shared heritage. The CPSESG also showed particular concern for the influence the ‘egalitarian’ and ‘socialist’ ethos had on shaping pupils’ understanding of the ‘common culture’:

The problem of these schools is urgent. For in them we are producing an alien generation of children who do not accept the common standards of customs of society and who are starved of its culture. They are the majority of our future citizens, and it is unfair to deprive them of their natural inheritance – unfair to them and dangerous to the future of the common weal. (CPESG - Cottrell, 1982: 56)

The common culture was different from the shared heritage, which involved tradition, and was more focused on the understanding of culture that was essential to be a ‘good citizen’. This was also picked up by the SAU, who were also concerned “that the history and culture of society are under threat” (SAU - O’Keeffe, 1986:

12). The SAU defined the ‘common culture’ as:

The means through which we have come to make sense of our world and operate within it. To create these means it has been necessary to break up the undifferentiated muzz to experience into manageable proportions. These proportions have come to be identified as ‘subjects’, relating to the external world of the senses or the internal world of feeling and wonder...transmitted through education so that the young have been prepared to take their places in civilisation created by their predecessors. (SAU - Bantock, 1986: 15)

This again linked up to ideas about what was necessary for education to allow pupils to become ‘good citizens’; it requires an understanding of the traditions of a shared heritage and an awareness of the customs and practices that make up a common culture.

The Hillgate Group argued this common culture was passed on through the generations by introducing pupils to a set ‘body of knowledge’. The Hillgate Group argued for the promotion of this body of knowledge in school-based education “which can broaden the mind and the experience of anyone who has the good fortune to be initiated in it” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 7). They argued traditional liberal curriculum, as opposed to the critical or progressive curriculum of the 1960s (see section 2.3.1; Dale, 1989), was the best means of preparing pupils for adult life.

The group stated that:

The difficult subjects of a traditional curriculum are, we believe, precisely the kind of thing that is required, if a child is to obtain either the competence necessary for a successful adult life, or the wider understanding and enriched

experience which are the greatest benefits of education. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 5)

These interest groups advocated for an education system that focused on developing an individual's capabilities and interests so that individual would grow up to be engaged with all aspects of adult life and be good citizens.

Interest groups also focused on the skills and attitudes that future adult citizens needed to access this body of knowledge. The *Black Papers* talked about this as developing the pupil's "independence of mind, the ability to think clearly, the imaginative faculties and an awareness of the greater achievements of our culture" (Black Papers - Cox & Boyson, 1977: 93). CPSESG publications likewise emphasised the development of all sides of the pupil, through the introduction of a broad education:

Education is more than training. It is concerned with the development of the whole man as man and not just as technician in the widest sense of the word. Such education must also, for the conservative, be set within the disciplined structures of past experience. It must produce the rounded man capable of standing on his own feet, capable of independent thinking, of being able to discern quality when he sees it and to reject the spurious substitute. (CPSESG - Pollard, 1982: 216)

The aim of education in producing future adults, according to the CPSESG, was to create good thinkers and consumers. The CPSESG discussed this as providing education that "ensure[s] that all our children achieve the maximum of which they are capable" (CPSESG - Flew, 1982: 24). In this pupils must also "develop an ability to express themselves, a sense of cooperation and a desire to discover things for themselves" (CPSESG - Grant, 1982: 98). In the finalised version of the *Right to Learn*, the CPSESG listed three purposes of education which they argued were traditionally the role of schools:

Providing children with access to accepted bodies of knowledge; giving them a range of essential intellectual and practical skills; [and] encouraging commitment to some of the values of our cultural heritage. (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982: 29)

They discussed the role of education in promoting these skills to allow pupils to gain access to different bodies of knowledge such as mathematics, science and history (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982: 29).

The final purpose of education noted by the CPSESG in the *Right to Learn*, commitment to the values of the common culture, was also discussed in the *Black Papers* and in the Hillgate Group manifesto. In the *Black Papers* there was discussion about the role of education in ‘transmitting values’. The authors argued that in addition to “the family...and the churches”, the schools also had the job of “transmitting the values of society” (Black Papers - Conquest, 1969: 18). *Black Paper* authors discussed the creation of good citizens as a function of education. The origins of conservative interest groups advocating for a national curriculum can be seen in this desire to convey a particular set of knowledge and values to students as in a ‘liberal education’ (see section 2.3.4; Bailey, 1984). The Hillgate Group manifesto brought together these themes in its justification for a national curriculum:

Many of Britain’s schools are in a state of crisis. Parents who rely on State education can no longer have confidence that their children will acquire the learning and skills which will prepare them for membership of society. They have less and less assurance that moral standards, religious understanding and a respect for British institutions will be communicated to their children. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 1)

The group argued that the state education system had to be reformed to ensure that it provided the necessary values and moral standards through ‘civic education’ (see section 2.3.4; Hargreaves, 1994) to ensure that pupils were prepared to fully participate in society as citizens.

5.2.2 *Economic Aims*

This sub-section looks at ideas about the aims of education that have an economic focus: concern about the crisis in skills, preserving economic competitiveness, and the role of industry. Finally, this sub-section turns to the mechanisms used to achieve these aims such as imparting training, attitudes and skills to create good workers.

Alongside these social critiques of the education system, employers and other industry-focused interest groups, including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), also noted the poor quality of the skills of school graduates. In Max Wilkinson’s publication for the CPS comparing British and Western European schooling, he highlighted statements from leading industrialists about a crisis in the deskilling of pupils (referred to from this point on as ‘skills crisis’):

Last year, in more than one of our major industrial cities, the engineering employees failed to recruit as many apprentices as they wanted because not enough school leavers achieved adequate standards. This is a remarkable indictment of our education system... The applicants were there; the IQs were there (the tests prove it). But the basic learned skills of literacy and numeracy were not. Managing Director, General Electric Company - Arnold Weinstock (1976)

The question of the relationship between the schools and employment has led to a great deal of comment from CBI members. They plainly have continuing and serious misgivings about the standards of achievement of many secondary school leavers, particularly the sixteen year-olds... The view has been expressed that many of these young people, after one of the longest periods of compulsory education in the world, are leaving school in particularly difficult circumstances, badly handicapped for most forms of employment by their lack of elementary skills in reading, writing, arithmetic and communication. Director of Education and Training, CBI - Michael Bury (1975)

(CPS - Wilkinson, 1977: 4)

Industrialists highlighted the perceived decline in the basic skills of school graduates which was also heavily referenced in the Ruskin College Speech and the Great Debate on education in the late 1970s (see section 2.3.2). As noted by the SAU, pupils were coming out of schools lacking the basic skills to function as good workers (SAU - Goldsmith, 1984). The SAU further noted that “many British companies are constrained in their growth by skill shortages” (SAU - Corfield, 1984: 50). They argued that the skills crisis had “immediate and long-term impacts”, reducing the immediate supply of skilled workers for necessary technical jobs, and impacting “research and development” in the long run (SAU - Corfield, 1984: 50). This was tied into a broader concern about the role of education in providing an “appropriate curriculum for an advanced economic system” (SAU - O’Keeffe, 1986: 11), which was also linked to issues of economic competitiveness.

The focus on how to compete in the international market led interest groups to consider how the British¹³⁷ educational system compared to other countries in preparing pupils for the world of work. At the CPS, both within and outside of the CPSESG, there was a turn towards Europe and the models that were used for addressing these economic issues. In his CPS publication, Max Wilkinson discussed the problems of the British system regarding who controls the content of education

¹³⁷ In this case the interest groups use the term British, but in other cases they use English.

as being a barrier to having standardisation in educational content (the management partnership is discussed further in Chapter 6):

The countries of Europe have all articulated detailed national policies about what their children shall learn in school and, in many cases, how they shall learn it; in Britain, the major decisions about content and method of education are left to the head teachers and staffs of 27,000 separate schools. (CPS - Wilkinson, 1977: 1)

For the CPSESG, Fred Naylor's work also looked at how England and Wales compared to other countries in how they approached technical education. As part of a larger discussion about the restructuring of sixth form education, Naylor focused on links between technical schools abroad and the technical schools of the tripartite era:

We are impressed by recent developments in the USSR along these lines [specialist schools], particularly the foreign language schools and those with a maths/computing or other scientific bias. The latter resemble our late lamented technical schools, and it is of interest to note that there are 45 maths/computing schools in Moscow alone. These schools represent a triumph of common sense, in assessing the national interest, over egalitarian or socialist dogma. (CPSESG - Naylor, 1981: 22)

Interest groups repeatedly used concern over the economy falling behind internationally to justify an examination of how employment-related skills were being dealt with under the comprehensive system and whether the system was serving the national interest. According to the CPSESG, "the training of mathematically inclined pupils in the more advanced skills is crucial for a nation which depends on technology for its economic survival" (CPSESG - Cox & Marks, 1982: 8). In a publication for the CPS, Cyril Taylor (a CPS Director and later head of the CTC trust) also used this international competitiveness argument to justify calling for an examination of vocational education in the British context, as for "a whole lost generation little or no training investment has been made. No wonder we have lagged behind our industrial competitors" (CPS - Taylor, 1986: 24). Interest groups, like the Hillgate Group, also drew on studies that highlighted the substantial gap between vocational education in England and other countries like Japan and Germany.¹³⁸ The economic competitiveness argument was utilised to justify investment in technical education in secondary schools. They argued that investing

¹³⁸ In comparison with Japan in 1987, pupils in the England lagged behind in mathematics in international tests as well as in school employment training; similar results were also shown in a 1985 comparison between Germany and England (Prais & Wagner, 1985; Prais, 1987).

in this type of education would produce ‘good workers’ to serve the ‘national interest’ (see section 5.1).

Interest group discussions also focused on the role of industry in education and how employers could help tackle issues of students’ skills and unemployment as well as maintain economic competitiveness. The SAU talked about the disconnect between the needs of industry and the skills of pupils leaving school. They argued that this could be addressed by involving industry more actively in school-based education:

Educationalists have long complained that industrialists do not specify what they expect of the education system and industrialists have equally complained that the education system does not meet their needs. (SAU - Corfield, 1984: 51)

The SAU recommended creating a more direct relationship with “mechanisms which bring the education system (the ‘supplier’) into a one-to-one contact with those who can provide jobs (the ‘users’)” (SAU - Corfield, 1984: 53). The SAU argued that if employers expressed clear requirements in terms of vocational education and training, then employers should also have an active role in shaping the outputs of education in terms of pupil skills. In 1985, the CBI conducted what they referred to as their largest ever consultation exercise. Through contributions from their membership, the CBI compiled a document that outlined the future plan for British industry, *Change to Succeed*, which was published at their National Conference in October 1985.¹³⁹ The CBI stated that addressing the country’s economic competitiveness was a key priority and called on industry to build stronger links with the education system in general. They argued that government “needs to ensure that the education system develops the aptitudes and attitudes necessary for the business sector”.¹⁴⁰ This again aligns with a vocational-based curriculum designed to make good workers. Education was again in the national interest, with society as a whole benefitting in economic terms by meeting industry needs and ensuring economic competitiveness. This represented the emergence of the ‘schools-industry movement’ (see section 2.3.5, Jamieson, 1985).

Interest groups focused on the skills and training that future adult workers needed. The SAU advocated for education that facilitated the “acquiring of skills, knowledge

¹³⁹ CBI Archive - C 7 86 Covering note for Council for the Meeting on 22 January 1986

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: 2

and attitudes in order to solve the daily practical problems and challenges of factory or office life” (SAU - Richardson, 1984: 73). The CPSESG outlined the basic skills that individuals needed to succeed in employment -- literacy and numeracy – while also arguing that curriculums should include practical skills as well as “some manual work” (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985: 7). Both the SAU and CPSESG advocated for education content which enhanced the pupil’s capacity to be a successful future worker. Both the SAU and CPSESG were advocating for ‘basic’ and ‘practical’ skills (see section 2.3.5, Jamieson, 1985).

One means of encouraging these skills was through the introduction of technology-specific training within schools, or the development of schools with a specific technical focus. Technical schools were advocated by the CPS (see section 4.3) as well as by the ASI (which is unsurprising given the crossover in membership – see section 3.2.2). Fred Naylor’s study of comparative education for the CPSESG recommended the creation of schools with a technical specialism (see section 4.3.1). Naylor drew on examples of successful technical-based education used in other countries, which included providing breadth of education as well as “direct vocational training” (CPSESG - Naylor, 1985: 61).

As noted in the last chapter, the discussion about the role of technical education at the secondary level came up again at the January 1986 CPS conference on employment. Cyril Taylor argued that technical schools had the capacity to provide specific training in “manual and technical skills” that a standard comprehensive school could not provide (CPS - Taylor, 1986: 29). Taylor also made the explicit connection between employment and the lack of these specific trainings in “that vocational skills are so little taught has to a large degree been responsible for young British school-leavers finding it so hard to obtain work” (CPS – Taylor, 1986: 24). This focus on technical education represents a turn towards a more ‘skills’-focused curriculum, one that wants to ensure pupils are adaptable to the world of work (see section 2.3.5, Cohen, 1984).

5.3 Internal Discussion: Within the Conservative Government and Department of Education and Science (DES)

This section will focus on the discussion around content and curriculum within the Conservative Government and within the Department of Education and Science (DES). Conservative politicians in this period often spoke of their concern for the ‘changing world’ that young people faced. This was mentioned year on year at the Conservative Party Conference (1979–1986) and at other key conferences attended by DES politicians. The idea of the changing world tended to reflect a concern about shifts in society, and in the shape of the job market, leading to calls for a curriculum that would respond to these changes. Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education (1986–1989), argued that the late 1970s to late 1980s was an important period of change in the role that the central state played in shaping the content of school-based education. Baker referenced the importance of the Ruskin College Speech (see section 2.3.2) in opening a dialogue about the content of education:

There was a great need for change in the education system. It had really been precipitated by the previous Prime Minister Jim Callaghan, who made a famous speech at Ruskin College talking about the curriculum. In the past, ministers never touched the curriculum, it was the holy vintage...the holy ground of the educational system and teachers and the education establishment. And he sought to question the curriculum, but very little was done when he was there.¹⁴¹

The central government involvement in the content of education can be broken into three periods of focus in terms of DES publications and policies from 1979 to 1986. The first period, 1980–1981, surrounded the DES consultation on the school curriculum and the resulting release of a white paper. In 1980, the DES released the Green Paper *A Framework for the School Curriculum*, which contained curriculum proposals for local authorities.¹⁴² This was followed by a consultation which resulted in *The School Curriculum* White Paper in March 1981. The White Paper provided “guidance to the local education authorities and schools in England and Wales on how the school curriculum could be further improved” (DES, 1981a: iii). Circular 6/81 was released in October 1981, which required LEAs to use the guidance in the White Paper to “review its policy for the school curriculum” and “plan future

¹⁴¹ Baker Interview – September 2014

¹⁴² The HMI also released a discussion document in 1980 on the content of education, *A View of the Curriculum*.

development accordingly” (DES, 1981b).¹⁴³ The second period of focus, 1982–1983, concerns the launch of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (see section 2.3.3). In November 1982, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced the creation of the TVEI, and a pilot scheme was started in 1983; this showed a movement to look at the role of technology and vocational training in education. Finally, the third period of focus was in 1985 with the DES release of the *Better Schools* White Paper which examined, amongst all other aspects of education, the curriculum.¹⁴⁴ This was followed by a consultation on economic awareness in the curriculum in 1986. The 1986 Education (No. 2) Act would then implement many of the suggestions made in *Better Schools* and the consultation that followed.

The ideas outlined in these policies and publications are explored in the following sections. Information collected from interviews with politicians and political advisers is used in this section. This is also supplemented by Rhodes Boyson’s memoir, *Speaking My Mind*. Materials are also used that are contemporaneous to the period discussed including: House of Commons Parliamentary debates (obtained from the online archive of HCPP); political speeches including party conference speeches (obtained from National Archive and Conservative Party Archive); Conservative Party Manifestos (1979 and 1983); and Green Papers, White Papers and Education Acts.

5.3.1 Social Aims

This sub-section parallels the sub-section in the external discussion (5.2.1) looking at aims of education that have a social focus: concern about standards and the education of citizens, the common culture, the areas of knowledge necessary to access the common culture and the transmission of values and moral education. Similar themes are used to those in the external discussion to draw parallels between ideas discussed externally and those discussed internally. Additionally, areas of formal connection between the external and internal discussion are also pulled out throughout this sub-section.

¹⁴³ “(a) review its policy for the school curriculum in its area, and its arrangements for making that policy known to all concerned; (b) review the extent to which current provision in the schools is consistent with that policy; and (c) plan future development accordingly, within the resources available” (DES, 1981).

¹⁴⁴ In 1985, as part of the *Curriculum Matters* series, the HMI published *The Curriculum from 5 to 16*.

Interest groups in this period focused on the politicisation of the content of education and the ‘threat’ of progressive influences on the curriculum as well as the impact that these would have on the development of citizens (see section 5.2.1). In *The School Curriculum* the Department of Education and Science (DES) emphasised the importance of ensuring education prepared pupils to be good citizens:

School education prepares the child for adult life, the way in which school helps him to develop his potential must also be related to his subsequent needs and responsibilities as an active member of our society. (DES, 1981:1)

The DES argued that schools must therefore ensure that pupils are receiving a curriculum which prepares them for adult life broadly, and educates them in the responsibilities of citizenship specifically. In 1984, Secretary of State for Education Keith Joseph talked about his ‘vision’ for Conservative education at the Party Conference, which included clear ideas about the type of citizen that education should be creating:

We understand that education’s job is to foster clear speaking, clear thinking, self-discipline, respect for the law, respect for others... understanding how a free society works.¹⁴⁵

Education should then create citizens who showed discipline and respect for the law; these are clear examples of ‘good’ and ‘conforming citizens’ (see section 5.1).

The March 1985 White Paper, *Better Schools*, stated that the “Government’s central aim” was to improve “standards” and resourcing “so that the schools more effectively help all our children and young people to become responsible and law-abiding citizens” (DES, 1985: 90). The White Paper emphasised ensuring that education was providing the right type of content to create good citizens. This showed the importance of ensuring the ‘right ethos’ in schools to create ‘good citizens’. In tackling the ethos of education, Joseph also addressed the issue of the ‘politicisation of the curriculum’ in his 1985 Conservative Party Conference Speech. He also stated that on the issues of “low quality”, “political education” and “peace studies”, “the government will do what it can.”¹⁴⁶ This concern over the politicisation of education was also reflected in the Prime Minister’s Party Conference Speech as well:

¹⁴⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive (CPA) – NUA 2/1/88 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1984: 1

¹⁴⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference, 1985: 2-5

While many parents are well content with the education their children are receiving, the story for some, especially in the inner city areas, is very different...lack of good discipline....political indoctrination in our schools; and the attempts by some local education authorities to control the curriculum and use it for political ends.¹⁴⁷

In 1985, Joseph and other members of the DES had regular meetings with the CPSESG on the issue of the politicisation of the curriculum.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the CPSESG members were key contributors to the entrance of this concern into government discussion. This indicates some form of ‘formal influence’ (see section 2.1; Stone, 2004) of external interest groups on the internal discussion of ideas.

When Kenneth Baker joined the DES as Secretary of State following Joseph, in House of Commons debates on the 1986 Education Act (mentioned at the start of this section) he returned to consideration of the ethos of education by ensuring “all pupils a curriculum which develops their talents and prepares them for responsible citizenship”.¹⁴⁹ In that debate, he also drew together this concern over politicisation of curriculum with the idea of good citizens:

There is no place for political indoctrination in our schools. But it is inevitable that issues of political character will arise in many areas of the curriculum; and it is right that these should be dealt with responsibly and objectively so that our children are helped to be good citizens.¹⁵⁰

He argued that some degree of political issues will inevitably enter into education, but that it was the government’s job to ensure that these this did not interfere with the creation of ‘good citizens’ (see section 5.1).

The purpose of education in promoting an understanding of the shared heritage and common culture in future citizens was also an aspect of the Conservative Government vision for education that was similar to discussion in the *Black Papers*, CPSESG and SAU (see section 5.2.1). In a 1980 House of Commons debate on teaching values in schools, Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson argued that schools had “four tasks” (which will be explored throughout this section as they

¹⁴⁷ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Thatcher, Conservative Party Conference, 1985: 8

¹⁴⁸ Cockett Papers – COCKETT/1/10 – Meeting of the Directors of the CPS – 12 June 1984: 5: “This group [CPSESG] has also taken a major initiative in getting together a large number of organisations and individuals who are concerned about the politicisation of the school curriculum, especially the introduction of subjects like Peace Studies. The Secretary of State for Education and Science is also concerned about these moves. A series of meetings chaired by Lady Cox, and organised by the Centre, are being held to co-ordinate all the opposition work that is going on.”

¹⁴⁹ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

relate to the main areas of discussion).¹⁵¹ One of these tasks related specifically to the importance of a ‘common culture’:

At each stage of history there is a body of knowledge that can be subdivided into subjects and that hold together a common culture, and it is the job of schools to pass it on.¹⁵²

He talked about accessing a specific ‘body of knowledge’ that must be passed on to communicate the common culture. This idea was very similar in nature to the language used by the SAU when they discussed there being specific subjects that transmitted the common culture (see section 5.2.1). This also represents part of the traditional ‘liberal education’ in teaching set subjects (see section 2.3.4; Bailey, 1984). Boyson’s task for education also relates to the *Black Paper* discussion of the ‘shared heritage’.

Secretary of State Mark Carlisle argued that school-based education should provide the whole range of aspects that equip pupils for “aspects of adult life”.¹⁵³ He argued that a balanced curriculum was crucial to providing skills and knowledge to pupils beyond the essentials needed for employment.¹⁵⁴ Carlisle’s idea of a set of broad curricular areas was similar to the ‘accepted bodies of knowledge’ discussed by the CPSESG (see section 5.2.1). This relates to the idea of developing all sides of the pupil through a liberal education. This was also related to Boyson’s fourth task for school-based education: “schools should impart values in art, music, religion, philosophy and literature”.¹⁵⁵ In its 1980 Green Paper *A Framework for the School Curriculum*, the DES outlined the broad aims of education that schools could focus on, including “help[ing] pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and apply themselves to tasks” (DES, 1980: 3). The documents outlined a further possible aim of “appreciate[ing] human achievements and aspirations” (DES, 1980: 3). According to the DES, as well as the CPSESG, schools needed to ensure pupils received an education in these broader curricular areas or values. In his memoir, Boyson argued there was an increased interest in the possibility of creating a ‘core curriculum’ that could be seen in *A Framework for*

¹⁵¹ He discusses ensuring they are skilled for industry’s needs, provided with knowledge of the common culture, provided with skills to thrive as workers and encouraged to adopt an appreciation for the values of human achievement.

¹⁵² HC Deb., 3 April 1980, vol. 982, cols. 623 – 762

¹⁵³ CPA – CRD 4/5/15 – Carlisle, North of England Education Conference 1981: 3

¹⁵⁴ CPA – NUA 2/1/82 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 11

¹⁵⁵ HC Deb., 3 April 1980, vol. 982, cols. 623 – 762

Schools (Boyson, 1995). During Keith Joseph's tenure as Secretary of State, he argued that curriculum needed to focus on the individual pupil and to "develop young people's personal attributes such as a sense of responsibility and the capacity for independent work".¹⁵⁶ These internal discussions expressed the idea of the purpose of education being about the development of future adults and citizens, vested with the knowledge and attributes of the common culture, who take on an active role in society.

Both interest groups and the Department of Education and Science (DES) in this period deemed the understanding of shared values an important concept. This understanding took the form of ensuring that pupils received exposure to the moral standards that underlay the common culture and the values of good citizenship. In the educational aims listed by the DES in *The School Curriculum*, schools instilling "respect for religious and moral values" (DES, 1981: 3) was one of the proposed aims. 'Moral education' was also referred to by the DES as part of the personal and social development of pupils as it "seeks to promote integrity, considerate behaviour and the pupil's understanding of the relationship between action and beliefs" (DES, 1981: 7). This was also closely associated with religious education in this period.¹⁵⁷ The role of religious education in the 1980s is not the focus of this research, but it is one of the underlying issues in the conservative understanding of the common culture (it was also an important issue personally for key politicians and political advisers).¹⁵⁸ It was also an aspect of the *Black Papers*' discussions of the role of education in preparing good citizens (see section 5.2.1).

In *The School Curriculum*, the DES reinforced the argument that schools "must appropriately reflect fundamental values in our society" (DES, 1981: 6). Secretary of State Keith Joseph also noted the importance of the school as a vehicle "for helping children to acquire the moral and intellectual equipment enabling them to

¹⁵⁶ CPA – PPB 176/7 – Joseph, North of England Education Conference 1982: 2

¹⁵⁷ "The School Curriculum" on the role of religious education: "The place of religious education in the curriculum and its unique statutory position accord with a widely shared view that the subject has a distinctive contribution to make to a pupil's school education. It provides an introduction to the religious and spiritual areas of experience and particularly to the Christian tradition which has profoundly affected our culture" (DES, 1981: 8).

¹⁵⁸ Griffiths Interview - September 2014: "There was also the issue of faith and the church, a subject Mrs. Thatcher was very interested in, and the whole relevance of Judeo-Christian thinking of the foundation of the market economy"...."I had a view like her about the nature of the human person, the nature of freedom and human dignity, the importance of choice and so on, the importance of standards and a moral basis for capitalism."

take their place in the life of the nation.”¹⁵⁹ According to Joseph, moral standards and intellectual skills ensured pupils were able to be good citizens, taking their right place in the larger ‘life of the nation’ in terms of participating in society. The focus on shared values made up a significant part of Joseph’s discussion of citizenship in that “young people when they leave school should have values and attitudes and understanding that equip them to live fulfilling lives as adults, as citizens.”¹⁶⁰ Joseph repeatedly discussed the values needed to make good citizens and adults. His language had a great deal of similarity to the CPSESG language about schools providing pupils ‘values of our cultural heritage’; again, the strong connection between the CPS and Joseph, as well as the CPSESG promoting this idea in a draft submitted to the DES (see section 5.2.1), may be reasons for the similarity in ideas.

5.3.2 Economic Aims

This sub-section parallels the sub-section in the external discussion (5.2.2) looking at aims of education that have an economic focus: concern about the skills crisis, preserving economic competitiveness and the role of industry in education. Finally, this sub-section turns to the mechanisms used to achieve these aims such as imparting training, attitudes and skills to create good workers.

Improving literacy and numeracy was an underlying goal for the first Thatcher administration as a means of addressing the ‘skills crisis’ (see section 5.2.2). The 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto pledged that the government would create guidelines for “reading, writing and arithmetic, monitored by tests” (Conservative Party, 1979: 18). At the 1979 Conservative Party Conference Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education, highlighted this growing concern about the skills of young people when he said that “our country has never been at a time when it had a greater need for skills”.¹⁶¹ In her 1979 Conference speech, Minister of State for Education and Science Baroness Young introduced a four-point plan to improve employment-related education.¹⁶² She highlighted the importance of addressing employment skills in the curriculum as the world was changing, leading to more

¹⁵⁹ CPA – NUA 2/1/86 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1982: 1

¹⁶⁰ CPA – NUA 2/1/88 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1984: 1

¹⁶¹ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 23/30

¹⁶² 1) Improve basic skills; 2) Encourage ‘flexibility and adaptability’ for working life; 3) Increase student motivation; 4) Link education and vocational training

youth unemployment.¹⁶³ In her four-point plan, Young argued that the government must ensure pupils have “a basic standard in mathematics and literacy”, arguing that this is the “rock on which all else is based.”¹⁶⁴ As mentioned under social aims, Under-Secretary of State for Education Rhodes Boyson argued that schools had four tasks, the first of which was to “provide literacy and numeracy, which are like Solomon’s wisdom. Once those abilities are achieved, they can be added to.”¹⁶⁵ This concern over ensuring the importance of literacy and numeracy in school curriculums relates to the issue of poorly skilled graduates raised by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) at the end of the 1970s (see section 5.2.2). Politicians within the DES were aware of these concerns from industry as “there were endless speeches made by industrialists saying they couldn’t employ the youngsters at 16, they couldn’t read or write. They were hopeless.”¹⁶⁶ Secretary of State Kenneth Baker noted that the Conservative politicians were aware of industry’s concerns throughout this period, which indicates an influence on internal discussions on the issue of skills. By providing checks on the basic skills taught in education, the Conservative Government sought to ensure that the outputs of education served the needs of industry and ensured an employed workforce; the Government wanted to ensure the creation of ‘good workers’ (see section 5.1).

The 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto stated a commitment to strengthening the capacity of the British economy in order to better compete in the international market. The Manifesto argued that “Labour’s economic policies have blunted our competitive edge” (Conservative Party, 1979: 21). The concern over the economic competitiveness of the country led to considerations of the broader economic purpose of education as can be seen in Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson’s 1981 speech:

The Conservative Party believes that education is valuable not only for its own sake, but also for our economic recovery. Higher education standards will help us educate better qualified school leavers who will be essential to Britain’s industrial and commercial futures. We are dependent on world markets and the ability to export. There is no easy way to pay ourselves more unless we earn it.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Young, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 3

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 3

¹⁶⁵ HC Deb., 3 April 1980, vol. 982, cols. 623 – 762

¹⁶⁶ Baker Interview – September 2014

¹⁶⁷ CPA – PPB 154/3 -- Boyson, Warrington by election campaign 1981: 2

Boyson highlighted the connection between education and maintaining a strong economic future for Britain, which also implies a concern about technological change in industry and a desire to remain adaptable as an economy. As stated in *The School Curriculum*, the value of school-based education was particularly important in an “increasingly competitive world economy” (DES, 1981: 1). The DES argued that rapid technology changes meant an emphasis on those subjects in school-based education that would strengthen the workforce’s capacity. The solution presented in the 1983 Conservative Party Manifesto was to invest more in technical training to bring it “to the level of our best overseas competitors” (Conservative Party, 1983: 30). The focus on bringing training in line with other countries in order to succeed economically was also a continuous theme in CPSESG discussions from late 1970s into the mid-1980s (see section 5.2.2).

Minister of State for Education Baroness Young’s four-point plan, mentioned earlier, advocated a strong link between education and the world of work. This meant a connection between school-based education and industry:

We need to link education and training for working life, as two sides of a single process of learning. That means a stronger vocational bias at the upper end of school.¹⁶⁸

This involved a larger role for industry in school-based education in terms of vocational training in education where “the class room must look to industry for guidance and employers’ needs must be met in the curriculum”.¹⁶⁹ She argued for a strong relationship between schools and industry; the key was to bring employers into education which ensured that their needs were met, alleviated issues of the skills crisis and helped to address the issues of youth unemployment by providing clear connections with future jobs. Secretary of State for Education Mark Carlisle also advocated for a “constructive relationship between those responsible for education and training”.¹⁷⁰ In *The School Curriculum* the DES listed a number of recommendations for creating a curriculum that addressed the economy’s needs as well as “establishing links between the education service and industry” (DES, 1981:18). This was considered particularly important by the DES for ensuring that

¹⁶⁸ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Young, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 11

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ CPA – CRD 4/5/15 – Carlisle, North of England Education Conference 1981: 20

education was serving the needs of industry. This same theme appeared in later discussions with the SAU and CBI in the mid-1980s (see section 5.2.2).

Conservative politicians also focused on the skills, attitudes and training necessary to create good workers. In Baroness Young's four-point plan mentioned earlier, she argued that schools must ensure pupils are "flexible and adaptable in the world of work".¹⁷¹ Her third point was about building pupils' motivation "to work hard to succeed and contribute to our country. What is so often needed today is a change of attitude, a real desire to do well."¹⁷² Secretary of State Mark Carlisle also aimed to improve not only the quality of skills and knowledge that pupils received in education, but qualities such as "leadership" and "self-reliance".¹⁷³ Self-reliance and a willingness to work hard were perceived by Conservative politicians as being important qualities and attitudes to build in future workers. The third of Boyson's tasks for education was to ensure that pupils had the necessary skills to earn a living.¹⁷⁴ Like Young, he argued that certain skills were important to create good future workers, in his case through basic employment-related skills as opposed to Young's more transferable skills (see section 2.3.5, Jamieson, 1985).

As Secretary of State for Education, Keith Joseph also focused on the content of what was needed to prepare pupils for the world of work. Joseph's focus on the world of work was shown in terms of creating linkages between education and working life, particularly so pupils could develop their own career interests. In his 1981 Conservative Party Conference speech, he talked about the creation of "pre-vocational" aspects to the curriculum for those who were "non-academic";¹⁷⁵ this links to the discussion in the last chapter about the differentiation of education based on different aptitudes and abilities (see section 4.2.3). Joseph argued that school-based curriculum should provide the means by which pupils could "discover what kind of job they might expect to tackle with success".¹⁷⁶ This indicated that he felt different aptitudes in education would play into later career paths for pupils. In

¹⁷¹ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Young, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 3

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 11

¹⁷³ CPA – NUA 2/1/82 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 11

¹⁷⁴ HC Deb., 3 April 1980, vol. 982, cols. 623 – 762

¹⁷⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/85 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1981: 13

¹⁷⁶ CPA – PPB 176/7 – Joseph, North of England Education Conference 1982: 3

1984, Joseph stated that engaging pupils with education more generally could also be done by making these links clearer:

The object is to make the curriculum more relevant, through questions such as whether mathematics should be taught in terms of the application in daily life; or whether there should be more attention to technical and vocational education.¹⁷⁷

Joseph's turn to technical and vocational education may have reflected the interest in such issues within the CPS (with Max Wilkinson's publication in 1977, which as noted earlier was a document used by Joseph during his time at the DES – see section 3.2.1) and the CPSESG (the issue was already under discussion in 1983 and 1984, prior to the key publication on technical schools in 1985 - see section 5.2.2).¹⁷⁸ Again, given Joseph's close connection with the CPS, and his usage of CPS publications on the merit of technical education, this indicates a formal influence on the introduction of ideas into the internal discussion.

One of the most important initiatives in the preparation of pupils for working life in this period by the DES was the TVEI programme, which was an influence on Joseph's plans for curriculum development (see section 2.3.3). The DES promoted the TVEI as an important way to “equip young people for working life” (DES, 1985:16). Ensuring a “relevance” to the curriculum was one of the fundamental principles set out by the DES in the 1985 *Better Schools* White Paper:

All subjects should be taught in such a way as to make plain their link with the pupils' own experience and to bring out their applications and continuing value in adult life. (DES, 1985:14)

The White Paper also noted the importance of a curriculum that enhanced pupil understanding of the larger economic environment and the factors that influenced it such as “the operation of market forces” (DES, 1985: 23); similar elements were outlined in the HMI report of the same year. As stated in *Better Schools*, during Keith Joseph's tenure as Secretary of State he worked with “selected employers' organisations” to isolate the “capabilities” they needed in future workers (DES, 1985: 15). The range of requirements was broad and focused on both skills and qualities needed for working life:

¹⁷⁷ CPA – NUA 2/1/88 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1984: 11

¹⁷⁸ RV Jones Papers – NCUACS 95.8.00/H.79 – Correspondence between Fred Naylor and R.V. Jones starting in January 1984 about Naylor drafting a publication on technical schools and asking for Jones' feedback. There was further correspondence between the two in 1984 on technical schools and discussion of this issue at the October 24th CPSESG meeting of that year.

Respondents gave widespread support for...the development of personal qualities and skills, including motivation and commitment, self-discipline and reliability, confidence, enthusiasm and initiative, flexibility and the ability to work both individually and as part of a team. Employers urged that schools should set out to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for adult and working life; most also stressed the need for greater emphasis on the relevance and practical applications of what pupils learn. Competence in reading, writing, and oral, numerical and social skills was seen as the essential minimum; it was also regarded as important that both pupils and teachers should have greater awareness of the wealth-creating function of industry and commerce (DES, 1985: 15–6).

According to the DES consultations, industry required at minimum that schools prepare pupils for the world of work by covering the basic skills discussed earlier in this section, as well as giving pupils a larger understanding of the workings of industry. *Better Schools* was followed by a consultation in 1985 on the place of work preparedness in the curriculum which was announced in March of that year; the DES approached local authorities, teacher organisations, and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).¹⁷⁹ Following a positive response to the consultation, in 1986 the DES approached the School Curriculum Development Committee (see glossary) to develop new content for schools that would be in line with the DES' economic aims.

5.4 Politicians' Interest in Technology Education

This section brings together ideas about preparation for the world of work discussed in this chapter, particularly in seeking to address the skills gap (see section 5.3.2), linking education to the needs of employer (see section 5.3.2), and increasing pupils' knowledge of the world of work (see section 5.3.2). First, specialist technical schools proposals are discussed, paralleling discussions held in the CPS (see section 5.2.2); this focused on the intentions of Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's proposal in 1985 for technology-plus schools. This was also discussed in the larger context of specialist schools in the last chapter (see section 4.3), but as Dunn was noted as a key actor involved in the creation of the CTCs (see section 2.5.3), it is also important to examine his proposal in terms of the aims and purposes of education. Second, this section provides context to Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's interest in technology and his work in other departments before joining the

¹⁷⁹ CPA – PPB 176/7 – Joseph – Department of Education and Science News Release Education Secretary Announces “A Fitting Initiative for Industry Year” – April 22, 1986

Department of Education and Science. This section focuses specifically on the role of these key actors and their agendas regarding technology education, which addresses research question 2 -- what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas? -- in this case, specifically regarding technology education. Primary source material used in this section is based on interviews (triangulated with Kenneth Baker's memoir, *The Turbulent Years*) and National Archive records.

5.4.1 Technology-Plus Schools and Bob Dunn

As mentioned in the last chapter (Section 4.3), Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn proposed the creation of a school with a specific technology focus. Dunn's proposal also offered a balanced curriculum up to GCSE level¹⁸⁰ (see section 5.3.1), after which point content would have a narrower focus compared to a comprehensive school. He wanted the overall focus of the school to be "biased from the beginning towards technology and commerce related subjects".¹⁸¹ The balance between depth (technology specialism) and breadth (broad general curriculum) was an important aspect of Dunn's proposal. He wanted to distinguish these proposed schools from the technical schools of the tripartite era, hence the significance of the name, technology-plus schools.¹⁸² Dunn's proposal was positioned as a way of addressing an unmet need in terms of 'economic awareness' in schools (see section 5.3.2) and more specifically as a way of addressing not only the 'skills crisis' but also a 'technical skills gap' (see section 5.3.2), which exemplifies how these two economic aims were brought together:

There is real evidence from industry and from other sources that our educational system is still turning out from our colleges and universities large numbers of intelligent young people whose knowledge of the workings of commerce, industry and of technology related subjects is almost nil.¹⁸³

In his proposal Dunn argued that providing such an opportunity would stimulate early interest in "commercial practice and in technology" and would provide a good opportunity to link up the needs of industry. Dunn wanted to build on the success of TVEI in building interest in technology education and vocational training, and he

¹⁸⁰ GCSEs were not introduced until 1986, but this was an internal document and the GCSE was already under development in the department, which is why it was mentioned prior to the policy introduction.

¹⁸¹ NA – ED 207/159 – Dunn, Technology-Plus Schools Proposal, p.3

¹⁸² Ibid., 2

¹⁸³ Ibid., 1

felt that these schools provided a means of reaching more pupils in a way that TVEI could not in as short a time.¹⁸⁴

5.4.2 Information Technology and Kenneth Baker

Historians note Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's interest in technology as an important influence on the decision to include an information technology (IT) specialism in the CTCs (see section 3.2.4).¹⁸⁵ Baker said that his interest in the area started from his time as Minister for Information Technology, where he started "a scheme to put one computer in every school" as "at that time schools didn't have computers".¹⁸⁶ Baker's interest in increasing pupils' access to IT grew and led to a national programme for technology education:

I also began setting up, across the country, a set of information technology centres called ITCS because I'd been inspired by one that happened in Kensington, the poor part of Kensington, that started at 16. They taught the youngsters how to use a computer. And these were youngsters who had virtually no qualifications... And I was so impressed with these that I managed to set up a network of two or three hundred of these across the country.¹⁸⁷

For Baker, access to computers, which was uncommon in this period, was a way of education connecting with pupils who could not normally be reached as "the computer was a way of switching them [the pupils] on...it was status as well".¹⁸⁸ It was this interest and engagement from pupils that, according to Baker, drove his decision to use computers as the access point:

I knew that technology could open up the mind of a child. There was a wonderful phrase coined by a Scottish figure of the Scottish enlightenment, the Intelligent Hand. And I've always believed that children could learn by doing things as well as studying. And this was very alien to the English education system, it was very very classroom based our education system, book based. And I wanted to inject something into it because I saw, particularly with the ITCS that I established in 1981, a transformation of people who had been written off, they've got no qualification at all...And by mastering a computer, and exploring what it can do, it lifted their status and their learning capacity. And so I was very convinced from the word go that technology was important.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ NA – ED 207/159 – Minutes of meeting to discuss Technology Plus Schools – 12 Mar 86, p. 2

¹⁸⁵ Griffiths Interview – September 2014: "Kenneth had been the minister of technology. He'd been in charge of Sunrise Industries and so on. He had a techy kind of feel to him and loves technology."

¹⁸⁶ Baker Interview - September 2014

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

It was in this way, with a focus on computing, that Baker felt technical education could be introduced into schools. He saw it as the “gateway” for introducing technology; “it was the beginning, it was the genesis”.¹⁹⁰ It was this interest in computing and how it prepared pupils for the world of work (see section 2.3.2) that influenced Baker’s thinking on education during his time as Secretary of State:

The curriculum had to be made more relevant to Britain’s national needs and the future employment opportunities for young people. We had to educate the young of today for the jobs of tomorrow. The curriculum would therefore need to be technologically oriented and involve employers and industrialists. Changing the culture of education in this way meant giving employers and industrialists the opportunity to enter ‘the secret garden’ of education. (Baker, 1993, p. 177)

The technology focus of CTCs would provide a way of meeting economic aims of education by opening up pupils and getting them interested and aligning pupils’ skills to meet the needs of employers and industry.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed research question 1, how did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science, with regard to the aims and purposes of education. The parallel structure of sections 5.2 and 5.3 emphasised the similarities in the ideas that were discussed both externally and internally.

The first area of discussion focused on the social aims of education, which related to the development of pupils into good citizens. Conservatives aimed to ensure that the content of school-based education prepared pupils to be responsible and law-abiding citizens. Interest groups were concerned about the impact of progressive ideas on the ethos of education, in particular the politicisation of education. The Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) was concerned about the politicisation of education and the introduction of subjects that introduced the wrong ethos into school curriculum. This concern was also reflected in the speeches of consecutive Secretaries of State, Keith Joseph and Kenneth Baker. The CPSESG also met regularly with Joseph regarding the politicisation of education during his

¹⁹⁰ Baker Interview - September 2014

tenure. Discussion of the ethos of education was linked to the concern about how aspects of the common culture and shared heritage were transferred to pupils -- future citizens. Politicians argued that it was the job of schools to provide pupils with the body of knowledge that represented the common culture and prepared pupils for aspects of adult life. The CPSESG and the Social Affairs Unit similarly discussed the importance of the introduction of pupils to different accepted bodies of knowledge. The ideas introduced externally and internally on this issue all reflected aspects of a traditional liberal education. Concern over how the common culture was taught in schools was also closely linked to ensuring that citizens received education in the correct morals and values. The CPSESG talked about the importance of education reflecting the values of the cultural heritage in their *Right to Learn* draft document submitted to the DES. Joseph echoed similar language in his speeches regarding the values and attitudes needed to equip pupils as citizens.

The second major area of discussion centred on the economic aims of education with a focus on the development of pupils into future workers. From the late 1970s, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) expressed concern over the status of basic skills like literacy and numeracy. The same concern was reflected in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto and speeches by Secretary of State Mark Carlisle, Minister of State Baroness Young, and Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson. Interest groups like the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) expressed criticism from the late 1970s into the early 1980s of how the British education system was preparing students for work in comparison to other European countries. This concern about ensuring education preparation was brought in line with close competitors was also an element of the 1983 Conservative Manifesto. The concern over economic competitiveness was a prominent theme in political speeches and in the first Department of Education and Science (DES) White Paper, *The School Curriculum*. In speeches by both Secretary of State Mark Carlisle and Minister of State Baroness Young, they expressed a desire to increase the role of employers in school-based education. This line of argument was later expanded and advocated by the SAU and CBI in the mid-1980s. Conservative politicians also discussed the specific skills and attitudes that would be needed to develop good adult workers. The CPSESG described the importance of developing basic skills, literacy and numeracy, and more practical skills, such as technical skills. In speeches, Secretary of State Keith

Joseph expressed a strong interest in the development of technical skills and technical education. The attitudes of flexibility, self-reliance and adaptability were also advocated by Carlisle and Young in the early 1980s; the SAU also returned to these themes of transferable skills in the mid-1980s. In 1986, Joseph conducted a consultation with employer organisations, including the CBI, to determine the skills, knowledge and qualities employers wanted from pupils, which indicates a clear role of formal influence for the CBI.

This chapter also addressed part of research question 2, what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas, with regard to the aims and purposes of education. Section 5.4 explored in more detail Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's proposal for technology-plus schools and how his proposal related to discussions of the skills crisis and encouraging a greater role for industry in education. The section also looked at Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's background, as Minister of Information, and highlighted his particular commitment to integrating information technology into the classroom as a way of preparing pupils with skills for the world of work. This section provides context for later discussions of the role of these different actors in promoting specific ideas in the creation of the City Technology Colleges (see Chapter 7).

6. Management and Funding

Introduction

This chapter explores the ideas of management and funding in education that were discussed between 1979 and 1986. Chapter 6 uses historical data and select interview data to answer research question 1: How did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science, with regard to management and funding? In order to understand the different approaches to management and funding, section 6.1 provides an overview of the different types of partnership that are discussed in this chapter. Section 6.2 explores ideas that were discussed external to the Conservative Government by think tanks and pressure groups, and through the contributions of the authors of the *Black Papers*. Section 6.3 then focuses on the internal discussion of these ideas within the Conservative Government to highlight instances of similarity in language and argument between the two areas as well as instances of formal connections.

6.1 Partnership in Education

Partnership was a recurring idea regarding the control of education both in terms of funding and management. This chapter draws on the two models of partnership discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4): the traditional model of partnership from the 1940s and the new model of partnership that began to emerge in the 1970s. The first model of partnership can be thought of as the ‘traditional partnership’, which came out of the post-war consensus and the 1944 Education Act (see section 2.4.1). The traditional partnership was referred to by many researchers as existing between the central state, local authorities and the teachers (McCulloch, 1994; Ranson & Tomlinson, 1986; Sharp, 2002). The second model of partnership was first proposed in the 1977 Taylor Report, *A New Partnership for Schools* (see section 2.4.2). This new model of partnership expanded the number of interests involved in the running of schools to give more weight to governing bodies, parents, staff and the local community (Sharp, 2002; Gordon et al., 1991). This new model of partnership was explored by the 1980s Conservative Governments and as such can be thought of as

the new ‘conservative partnership’ in education. This model of partnership placed the focus on the users or consumers of the system: parents and communities.

This new type of partnership also corresponded to shifts in ideas about accountability, both in management (see section 2.4.4) and in financing (see section 2.4.5). This meant changing ideas about the degree to which various elements of the partnership were accountable to other elements and in what ways. How were schools accountable to communities and to parents? And how were schools accountable to the central government? This new idea of partnership also showed movements towards both decentralisation and centralisation in both proposed external interest group and internal government approaches.

6.2 External Discussions: By Right Leaning Interest Groups

This section explores ideas about where authority and influence should lie in education, as well as some of the tensions that underlie those ideas. It also includes discussion of many of the proposed mechanisms for control -- specifically those relating to funding and management of schools. The views in this section come from conservative educationalists from a number of think tanks: the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) (and its Education Study Group (CPSESG)), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI). It also includes the views of contributors to the *Black Papers* and members of pressure groups like the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Hillgate Group. To provide context to the analysis, this section relies on information collected from interviews with political advisers associated with these groups (the author conducted these interviews thirty years after the events discussed). All other material included in this section is contemporaneous to the period discussed: published materials from the various groups (it is noted which groups are associated with the publications); the *Black Papers*; and archival material from the CPS (footnotes include information about the archival sources).

6.2.1 Managing Education in Schools

This sub-section first explores concerns about the traditional partnership in the management of education regarding the mix of responsibilities between the local and central governments and the schools. Ideas about accountability and movements

towards decentralisation and centralisation emerge from the discussion. The second half of this section then explores themes of the new conservative model of partnership and the roles of the schools, headteachers, governing bodies and parents.

Transforming the traditional partnership

As was discussed in the *Black Papers* (see section 4.1.1), one of the key criticisms of education policy, throughout the late sixties and continuing through the seventies, was the move to comprehensivisation in schools. This was a criticism of both local and central government; central government in pursuing a more active policy on the issue (see section 2.4.1) and local authorities in deciding to reorganise along comprehensive lines. The stronger guidance from the central government on the issue of comprehensive education came under the 1976 Act (see section 2.2.2). The *Black Paper* authors were concerned over the ‘authoritarian’ nature of this change in education policy, which encouraged ‘uniformity’ in the education system.

In the 1981 SAU publication *The Pied Pipers of Education*, John Marks and Caroline Cox (also of the CPSESG) highlighted the problems of centralised control and the comprehensive system that led to reductions in “local autonomy” and “independent initiatives” (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 18). They argued that comprehensivisation had reduced the partnership role for schools over management decisions and were “brought about by more central control of schools, both by national government and by local authorities” (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 18). The SAU criticised what they saw as a shift in the traditional model of partnership, where both local authorities and the central government restricted the autonomy of the individual schools. The members argued that this meant that both local authorities, and schools themselves, were not able to be held answerable or accountable to those who had an active interest in education like parents. This draws on the idea of ‘responsive accountability’ (see section 2.4.4; Elliott, 1981), whereby if schools were given great autonomy in their management they “could be more responsive to the wishes of parents, more adapted to local needs and more thoroughly *educational*” (SAU - Anderson, 1981: 7). The emphasis of the SAU on responsive accountability also linked to the ideas of addressing individual needs in education (see section 4.1.3). The SAU used this as a justification for giving greater

autonomy to schools, particularly to school heads. This discussion shows a desire by the SAU for more decentralisation of authority to the schools themselves.

In the 1984 publication *Omega File: Education Policy*, the ASI was even more critical of local authority control ‘stifling’ the autonomy of schools in a number of areas:

Unlike private schools, which operate on their own as business units, state schools are enmeshed in a suffocating web of bureaucracy which greatly curtails the flexibility and freedom of action of each school. Local education bureaucracies determine many of the details of how schools should be run, provide the ancillary (often at very high cost), help plan the curriculum, and generally take many of the decisions about allocation of time and resources within each individual school. Teachers’ salaries, grades, conditions, and hours, and many other important decisions are taken centrally. (ASI, 1984: 5)

The ASI emphasised the restrictions on the flexibility of schools to take action on management decisions, again referencing issues of responsive accountability. The ASI also placed particular emphasis on the lack of autonomy for schools regarding their own internal operations such as staffing. This meant that within schools responsive accountability from headteachers to teachers was restricted by centralised control of staffing decisions. Another key issue, according to the SAU, was a lack of ‘contractual accountability’ (see section 2.4.4; Becher, Eraut, & Knight, 1981) in the management of the education system. In a 1984 SAU publication, Clive Priestley, the Director of Special Projects at British Telecom, criticised local authorities and the ‘bureaucratisation of education’ as derailing fundamental accountability and authority in education. He argued that the bureaucracy hindered schools having “clearly stated objectives for their staff and students; which are assessed critically but fairly against generally accepted standards and criteria” (SAU - Priestley, 1984: 57). He argued that the bureaucracy of the existing partnership hindered the professional accountability of teachers to headteachers. Decentralisation would allow both more ‘downward accountability’, as the ASI argued was needed by headteachers to staff, and more ‘upwards accountability’, as the SAU argued was needed by staff to headteacher (see section 2.4.4; Epstein, 1993).

In addition to the discussion by other interest groups about the decentralisation of management powers to the schools, the Hillgate Group also called for more centralisation of regulatory powers:

We believe that LEAs should be deprived not only of the power to provide education, but also of the power to enforce it. All legal responsibilities must be returned to Parliament, which is their rightful guardian, until it is possible once again to bestow them on institutions which will be genuinely answerable for their exercise, and genuinely concerned to enforce them. (Hillgate Group, 1986: 13)

This showed a strong emphasis from the Hillgate Group on removing the role of local authorities in the management of education altogether. It also showed a concern about the degree to which local authorities were accountable for their actions -- concern about the 'professional accountability' of the local authorities (see section 2.4.4; Becher, Eraut, & Knight, 1981). The Hillgate Group argued that education was once a partnership between local and central government, but that the partnership needed to come to an end (Hillgate Group, 1986: 3). The Hillgate Group referenced the traditional model of educational partnership. The contraction of the role of the local authorities and the expansion of the role of schools with clear regulations from central government showed a desire from interest groups to move away from the traditional partnership to a new model of partnership which aimed to facilitate schools being answerable and accountable.

New conservative partnership

As was just discussed, the *Black Paper* authors, the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG), the Social Affairs Unit (SAU), the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) and the Hillgate Group all called for a reconfiguration of the partnership that managed school-based education. This involved a more active role for all the partners with a vested interest in education, including a strong role for headteachers as well as an increased role for parents and communities through school governing bodies.

The importance of providing headteachers with more authority in schools was seen as essential to improving accountability by various interest groups. The Hillgate Group discussed headteachers regaining control over the operation of schools, in particular control over staffing decisions inside schools:

Heads should be free to hire and dismiss staff in accordance with the normal laws of efficiency and corporate interest. They should be able to offer higher salaries, if necessary, to secure those who are genuinely competent. They should be entitled to remove incapable teachers. And they should be able to

draw up their own contracts of employment, in answer to the specific needs of the schools for which they have responsibility. In turn, they should be answerable to the governing board for their decisions (Hillgate Group, 1986: 11).

The Hillgate Group argued that headteachers were better able to respond to the needs of their own pupils than local authorities, and so would potentially shape the schools' ethos and content. They argued that headteachers provided an important check on quality in schools and could ensure professional accountability in the staff; and in turn, headteachers could be held accountable to the governing bodies.

Interest groups also proposed another means of ensuring more autonomy for schools through increasing the role of governing bodies. The SAU argued that the role of governing bodies (the board of governors) in terms of management was important to ensuring the accountability of headteachers and teachers:

The Boards of Governors would play a role analogous to that of the Boards of Directors, actively overseeing the broad strategy of the school, with discretion over day-to-day management being delegated to the headteacher....Removal of incompetent headteachers and teachers would be helped by improved accountability (SAU - Goldsmith, 1984: 31).

The SAU argued that the governing bodies could provide a check on headteachers and the overall running of the school. Given that headteachers were argued to be the best means of ensuring standards in education, it is important to note that these interest groups still felt that an additional accountability check was needed on the individual headteachers (and on teachers in general).

Interest groups saw enhancing the role of governing bodies as a means of increasing the influence of local interests including parents, the larger community and industry. The SAU criticised the traditional partnership of local government, central government and schools for failing to provide a role for parental interests. The SAU argued that "this 'partnership' has been in effect the owner of the educational service and the interest of the people has been too little represented" (SAU - Priestley, 1984: 58). The ASI emphasised the importance of the role of parents in ensuring that schools provided 'consumer accountability' (see section 2.4.4; Ranson, 2003) and as a means of improving quality, which picks up on the idea of consumer pressure (see section 4.1.2):

The key to successful reform of the state school system is for parents to be given more power and responsibility. There is a need for increased accountability of teacher and schools to the parents, increased parental involvement in the schools themselves, and more diversity in the education system. Increased parental responsibility, involvement, and choice will encourage improvements in educational standards, since all parents want their children to receive a good education that will qualify them for good jobs. Our school system must be accountable to them if they are to ensure that this happens. (ASI, 1984: 5)

The ASI argued that the local authorities, even though they were elected to represent these groups, would not be directly involved in the partnership; the relevant interests themselves, such as members of the community, parents and industry, would have a more direct role in ensuring accountability in the system. The value of involving some of these groups, in particular industry, links back to discussions about the purposes of education (see section 5.2.2). This value was highlighted by the SAU, which argued that there is a:

Tangible contribution which those in industry can make toward the adaptation of the education system. The growth of technical literacy, at least in its initial stages, at present requires the employment of those in industry on a part-time basis in schools and universities, and this is already happening often as a result of the initiative of companies. (SAU - Peacock, 1984: 10–1)

The SAU argued that the involvement of industry in school governing bodies could provide a way of enhancing the connection between education and work.

The ASI outlined in detail the various elements that were needed for a successful board, including the inclusion of parents with children at the school (who would be chosen by postal ballot), the headmaster (who would be like a ‘chief executive’), teacher representatives and members of the ‘local business community’; the local authority could even be invited to have an advisory role. The Hillgate Group proposed the development of school constitutions; these constitutions would outline how individual schools would govern themselves. The Hillgate Group emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach to management and argued that “the constitution of each school should be chosen by the parents in consultation with the headteacher” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 10). They suggested the creation of model contracts between the central government and the schools, which would provide templates on how to ensure representation of a wide range of groups in managing these schools. In the Hillgate Group vision, school governing bodies would have

“full legal responsibility for the administration of the school, including the appointment of the head” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 11). The model suggested by the Hillgate Group was in contrast to models of oversight and regulation that relied on local authorities to handle the administration and appointment of staff in individual schools. The model of partnership the SAU, ASI and Hillgate Group advocated was very similar to a partnership based on balancing the different interests described by the Taylor Report (see section 2.4.2).

6.2.2 Funding of Education

In the funding of school-based education, interest groups identified the key problems as ensuring the system provided ‘value for money’ and efficiency (see section 2.4.5). One alternative suggested to address these issues was to give the schools more autonomy over their own funding. Private funding and the creation of trusts or foundations were also means of allowing the different interests involved in the new conservative partnership to invest in education.

Value for Money and Efficiency

This section looks first at the problems interest groups highlighted in state funding for school-based education. In the 1981 SAU publication *The Pied Pipers of Education*, Digby Anderson expressed concern that state schools were not efficient in education spending:

State schools are not giving value for money. They have lost sight of their central purpose which is to provide maximum learning at minimum cost. They do not monitor their efficiency. They attempt to conceal their enormous costs and poor results. (SAU - Anderson, 1981: 7)

Anderson was particularly concerned with the issue of obtaining value for money in education, which he believed could be done by focusing on the outputs of education (although he did not outline what these should be). In his work for the CPSESG, Antony Flew noted that the voucher (see section 4.1.4) could be used as a way of ensuring value for money in the state system:

This proposal [the voucher scheme] offers the only real hope of getting much more value for money than we have in fact been getting, of achieving a greater and better educational output for a resource input the same or smaller. (CPSESG - Flew, 1983: 4)

He argued that competition provided the ideal “way of raising efficiency, and getting better value for money” (CPSESG - Flew, 1983: 4). Flew strongly argued for vouchers on the grounds of “cost effectiveness” (CPSESG - Flew, 1983: 4). In this way, value for money can be seen as a ‘quantifiable measure of accountability’ (see section 2.4.5, Rapple, 1992).

One way that this concern about efficient usage of resources for best educational outcomes came out in CPSESG pamphlets was in criticism of the operation of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). One of the CPSESG concerns about the ILEA was “that neither pupils nor ratepayers are getting ‘value for money’” (CPSESG - Naylor & Norcross, 1981: 2). The CPSESG saw the ILEA as being an example of local authorities using public funding inefficiently, without clear deliverables being demonstrated in terms of improvement of educational standards for the pupils or parents. The CPSESG was primarily concerned with the ILEA’s usage of resources to pursue “social and political objectives at the expense of measureable educational achievement” (CPSESG - Naylor & Norcross, 1981: 4). In short, the CPSESG believed that the ILEA did not provide good value for money. They argued that given the ILEA’s high spending on staffing costs and educational provision without a clear improvement in standards or achievement, they were not achieving value for money. While the CPSESG discussed the ILEA in specific in these cases, they were concerned about the efficiency of the traditional partnership of education in general and the role of local authorities in financing in general (CPSESG - Flew, 1983).

In his 1984 publication for the IEA, Stanley Dennison echoed some of these concerns in that the state system in general, not just local authorities, was a monopoly that provided users a service that was “poor value for money” (IEA - Dennison, 1984: 9). In the *Omega File: Education Policy*, the ASI proposed the introduction of ‘per caput funding’¹⁹¹ where grants to local authorities would be based on the numbers of students and therefore where there was greatest consumer demand (ASI, 1984). They argued that this system would ensure more efficient allocation of financial resources in state education.

¹⁹¹ This is the phrasing used in the original source though it is per capita funding as described by others.

Direct Funding of Schools

Interest groups also suggested that efficiency and value for money could be increased in the state system by giving more autonomy over funding to the schools rather than the local authorities. In their 1981 SAU publication, John Marks and Caroline Cox (also of the CPSESG) proposed “educational allowances” as a way of encouraging “local initiative and autonomy” similar to their understanding of the Dutch system at the time, where the “majority” of schools were state funded but privately run.¹⁹² Educational allowances, in their understanding, seemed in practice not much different from a voucher-based scheme in that “these [education allowances] would be given to parents who could ‘spend’ them in schools of their choice, either in the state or independent sector” (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 19). Cox and Marks argued that educational allowances would have a number of benefits including increased autonomy for state schools.

Marks and Cox argued that this funding reform would still require a major role for the central state in terms of providing “finance”, ensuring the distribution of “information” and in “the maintenance of standards” (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 22). By contrast, they argued that the role of local authorities would be substantially reduced and focused on ‘public goods’ (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 22-3).¹⁹³

Increasing the funding autonomy of schools would reduce the role of local authorities, but increase the role of central government by acting as a ‘facilitator’ in terms of providing the resources to the schools. The Hillgate Group used similar language in discussions of funding schemes that would involve schools directly in the control of financing, with central government “act[ing] as mediator and stimulator in the creation and maintenance of schools” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 8). The SAU and the Hillgate Group argued that the central government would always then have an important facilitation role in providing funding directly to the schools. By giving the funding directly, they argued that the schools would provide more

¹⁹² Cox and Marks’ understanding of the Dutch system of state funding for independently run schools: “Holland, for example, has a system involving public funding of independent schools which has operated successfully since 1917, so much so that the *majority* of Dutch schools are privately run and sixty-five per cent of government education expenditure goes on these schools” (SAU – Marks and Cox, 1981: 18).

¹⁹³ “But with many, or even most, schools becoming self-governing, local authorities would be able to concentrate much more effectively on providing services which fall more into the category of public rather than private goods. Examples include schools for the handicapped, special services for educational priority areas and extra tuition in English for immigrant groups. If they acted vigorously in these areas, local authorities could easily meet the most serious practical objection to allowances – that they might lead to ‘sink’ schools in poor areas, particularly in our inner cities. Also it is highly desirable to reduce the size of the educational bureaucracy and limit the educational responsibilities of the more wildly extravagant local authorities” (SAU - Marks & Cox, 1981: 22-3).

accountability and efficiency in usage of resources than had been done by local authorities. This also shows a movement to decentralise funding directly to the schools and to centralise administration of funding to the central state.

Private Funding

The integration of private funding into state education was an idea discussed by interest groups in the mid-1980s. The SAU argued that industry contributes financially to education through their tax money and benefits in terms of the resulting workforce, but in order to get better value for money, industry also deserved control over the direction of education. In a publication for the SAU, Michael Brophy, Director of the Charities Aid Foundation, discussed the role of private funding for schools as a means of regaining this control:

It is an adage of contemporary educational wisdom that we need an educational system less isolated from the 'community', a system which encourages 'participation' by those 'outside' it. Such talk is likely to remain pious and platitudinous unless the involvement of those 'outside' is financial, unless schools and colleges are funded in part by sources other than the state – private sources, particularly charitable donations. If ways could be found to permit private funding to have an impact on State schools and colleges, the polarisation between private and state education could be reduced, the total funding of the State sector increased, its receptiveness to 'outside' influences and opportunities heightened and, indeed, the concerns of many other contributors to this volume, that education is isolated from the community of work, leisure and the family, reduced. This is of paramount importance at a time when both unemployment and the new technology require educational innovations that cannot be met out of public funds because of expenditure control. (SAU - Brophy, 1984: 33)

He argued that the introduction of private funding was a way of giving schools more autonomy, as they would not be solely reliant on state funds. It also provided a way for other members of the new conservative partnership, primarily industry, to have more control over education. The SAU argued that there were three substantial barriers to the introduction of private funding. First, the scale of public funding would overshadow private contribution; therefore, investors would be less inclined to invest in state education as they could not see a clear impact from their investment. Second, the introduction of private funding would be resisted by opponents on ideological grounds. And finally, the tax system would need to be revised to allow donations into education.

The SAU suggested two possible mechanisms for revising the tax system to encourage private investment in education. The first relied on the government returning to industry income they had paid on taxes based on the understanding that industry would then contribute this directly to education:

Government, central or local should return to employers a fraction of their taxes or rates as ‘education awards’ and allow them to donate these to those schools and colleges which show a practical concern for the changing needs of industry. (SAU - Anderson, 1982: 12)

This proposed mechanism was a direct means of the government shaping the behaviour of industry. Income would be returned to employers with a clear intention of contributing to education. The second mechanism suggested by the SAU was a more indirect means of encouraging industry to invest in education. The SAU suggested that schools could create “Charitable Foundations” as “they have done this in the United States” (SAU - Brophy, 1984: 42). Employers would then be able to take a tax break on any contributions made to the foundation as they would be able to for other charitable giving. The SAU argued that industry could take a full sponsorship role as was also done in the USA, where “a particular company will be twinned with a particular school. It will give money both in kind and in skills” (SAU - Brophy, 1984: 42).

The Hillgate Group also discussed similar concepts about private sponsorship wherein “schools should be encourage to seek finance from outside sources – business, charities, churches, etc. – in order to improve their facilities” (Hillgate Group, 1986: 15). The Hillgate Group talked about schools being owned by individual trusts in the sense of a sponsor or charitable foundation like those discussed by the SAU. This linked to ideas of direct funding contracts between schools and the central government in which trusts, rather than local authorities, are a means of facilitating the distribution of funding. It also provided a potential opportunity to easily facilitate the integration of private funding; private contributors could give funds directly to the trust, which would in turn distribute the funds to the schools directly. They argued that the trusts would manage the schools and provide consumer accountability to the funders.

6.3 Internal Discussion: Within the Conservative Government and Department of Education and Science (DES)

This section will focus on internal discussions about control of education through management, and funding in the Conservative Governments (1979– 1986) and within the Department of Education and Science (DES). The primary source material used in this section comprises individual, institutional and political party viewpoints. Information collected from interviews with politicians and political advisers is used in this section (interviews were conducted thirty years after the events discussed). Materials are also used that are contemporaneous to the period discussed, including: House of Commons Parliamentary debates (obtained from the online archive); political speeches including party conference speeches (obtained from the National Archive and Conservative Party Archive); Conservative Party Manifestos (1979 and 1983); and White Papers, Green Papers and Acts.

6.3.1 Managing Education in Schools

When looking at the Conservative Government discussions about control in education there are five distinct threads outlining the role various entities should have in control over the management of education. These include the roles of local government, central government, school governing bodies, parents and headteachers. This sub-section explores changing ideas about the roles of the different partners, first exploring the traditional partnership and second examining the new conservative partnership. The mix of the amount of control and authority politicians wanted these different entities to have reflects some of the larger tensions referenced in the external discussion; the parallels to the external discussion will be noted in each individual theme. This will include looking at movements to increase centralisation of certain aspects of management and decentralisation of others.

Transforming the traditional partnership

In a 1979 speech, Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson argued for a move away from growing central control in education to allow local authorities to be more responsive to “local needs”:

We want local authorities to provide a service which responds totally to local needs and wishes. Labour’s 1976 Education Act represented an unwarranted intrusion by central government into the affairs of local communities. Our immediate and most urgent task is thus to repeal the legal obligation in that

Act which compelled all local authorities to reorganise their schools according to one national comprehensive pattern irrespective of the wishes of the people in each area.¹⁹⁴

His concern over the Labour Government's more direct policy action in this area and the impact on responsiveness to local communities and needs reflects the ideas of the *Black Papers*, of which Boyson was an author and editor (see section 6.2.1). As shown in Secretary of State for Education Mark Carlisle's 1979 Conservative Party Conference speech, there was a movement to enhance the freedom of local authorities by eliminating the compulsion to reorganise along comprehensive lines:

We have already removed from the Statue Book those sections of the Education Act of 1976 which imposed a single form of comprehensive education throughout the country irrespective of the wishes of local people and local authorities. We have restored to local authorities and local people the right to organise their own schools in the way they want them.¹⁹⁵

Carlisle argued that local authorities, and local communities, should have control over decisions about the structure of education, which linked to discussions about diversity and choice in education (see Chapter 4); this was both about increasing local authority flexibility and therefore allowing them to be more 'responsive' to local people (see section 2.4.4; Elliot, 1981).

In the mid-1980s discussions moved away from the desirability of giving local authorities flexibility in management of education to increasing self-management of schools. Similar to the ASI discussion in 1984 (see section 6.2.1), there was a shift within the DES discussions towards a desire for increased self-management by schools. In a House of Commons question in December 1985, the DES was asked whether they would "introduce legislation to restrict the circumstances in which education authorities may intervene in the internal management of schools"¹⁹⁶.

Minister of State Chris Patten replied:

The Education Bill to be introduced this Session will include proposals to establish a consistent pattern in the distribution of functions between the governing body, the local education authority and the head teacher. The local education schools authority will not then be able to override the governing body or the head teacher in the discharge of the functions allocated to them.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive (CPA) – PPB 154/3 – Boyson, Welsh Conservative Conference 1979: 1

¹⁹⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 21

¹⁹⁶ House of Commons Debates (HC Deb.), 17 Dec 1985, vol. 87, cols. 673 – 718

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

The issue then for Patten was fundamentally about achieving the correct balance of responsibility in the education service and reducing the role of local authorities. In debates on the introduction of the 1986 Education Act (see section 2.4.3), Patten outlined the aims of the bill “to improve the management of schools by promoting greater democracy in our education system”.¹⁹⁸ He argued that the meeting of this aim, and the larger aim of ensuring quality, had to be done within the context of the ‘partnership’ that underlay the English education system; in this case moving from a more traditional partnership to the conservative partnership. Patten argued that in the management of education “power has been quite deliberately fragmented between various interests” but that the Education Act was “essentially about the nature of this education partnership. We want to see it performing better in the interests of individual pupils.”¹⁹⁹ Patten’s language about making the different interests in education more ‘responsive’ to the individual again has similarities to the SAU discussions about freeing schools to be more accountable and decentralising management more than in the traditional partnership (section 6.2.1).

When Kenneth Baker became Secretary of State for Education, he referred to the conservative partnership in education as one which strove to get the ‘balance of responsibility’ right between the different partners. In the debate about the 1986 Education Act, Baker said:

We operate through a decentralised school system; and I believe in such a diffusion of power. It is right to devolve responsibility even in a national service such as education... I think that all of society, not just our education system, can be happier and more stable if more is done at the rim of the wheel and less at the hub. This process, however, can go further, beyond the level of the local education authority to the level of the school and the community served by each school. At present, we have not got right either the balance of responsibility between central and local government or, more importantly, the balance between the LEA and all those other interests that give life to a school. Moreover, the present distribution of responsibilities varies in a haphazard and rather bizarre fashion from place to place and it is often unclear, even to those most closely concerned. The diffusion of power no longer works properly. Diffusion has become confusion.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

In Baker's view a stronger partnership should be built between the various levels of government and schools themselves. Baker argued not just for decentralisation, but rather for an ordered re-balancing of responsibilities in a new form of partnership. Baker talked about the 1986 Act as being an important step in shifting the partnership in terms of who had 'powers' and 'responsibilities' in the management of education:

This is why our Education Bill radically changes the composition of school governing bodies. It gives these bodies new powers and responsibilities. We will end the dominance of the Local Authority and its political appointees. It will no longer be possible for Local Authorities to foist a headteacher on a school against the wishes of the governors.²⁰¹

Baker argued that the traditional partnership of education no longer worked and a new configuration was needed. Baker's arguments about more being done at the wheel than the hub, and devolving power to the schools themselves, reflects some of the ideas referenced by the SAU and ASI, giving schools more responsibilities to ensure more responsive accountability to the community (see section 6.2.1).

New conservative partnership

As Stuart Sexton (former *Black Paper* author and DES policy adviser) noted, the 1980s were a key period of change wherein schools were coming to be viewed as being able to self-manage in a way that only independent schools had previously done, and that there would be a direct relationship with government, bypassing local authorities:

Having state schools that are self-managing, but funded from central government. And of course the philosophy, particularly for me, was that when I look at the independent schools, what do they have that the state schools don't have? It's not money, it's they have the freedom to manage, and could we not give the same freedom to the state schools.²⁰²

Borrowing from the model of the independent sector, the Conservative Governments of the 1980s aimed to extend the ethos of self-management and self-regulation to state schools. As noted earlier in this chapter, the traditional partnership gave particular importance to the relationship between the local and central government, whereas the conservative partnership refocused attention on the beneficiaries of

²⁰¹ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

²⁰² Sexton Interview – September 2014

education and the importance of the role of the schools themselves. The rest of section 6.2.1 will focus on the elements of this new partnership.

Headteachers were an important part of the conservative partnership for politicians. In his 1986 Conservative Party Conference speech, Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker called for a renewed importance for the role of headteachers which he felt had been lost:

I want to see headteachers win back the standing and place they had in society 50 years ago. They are special people, they are leaders, they have a unique position to influence the lives of generations of young people.²⁰³

Baker picked up on the argument, also expressed by the Hillgate Group (although their manifesto was not published until after the speech), that the headteacher was the most important check on quality in education:

Every week I try and spend one day visiting schools, and I've seen some very good ones. I also read a lot of reports about schools and these confirm what I have always believed to be true... The key to a successful schools is the Head. If there is a good headmaster or a good headmistress then the school will be good. That is why I want to see more power given to the headteachers. I want to see them together with their governing bodies controlling more of the money spent in their schools.²⁰⁴

Baker mentioned the importance of the management partnership in education, particularly between the headteacher and the governing bodies. This focus on the value of both these roles to the ability of schools to self-manage was consistent with the broader Conservative Government policy. As Brian Griffiths, Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, said in an interview with the author, the first aspects of the '10-point plan on education' (see section 4.2.6) related to this change in partnership in that "we need greater devolution of responsibility to heads and governors in managing the schools".²⁰⁵ There seems to be a consistency in this period regarding the importance of headteachers to ensuring quality and professional accountability.

As noted in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), the 1980 Act required the inclusion of various interests in governing bodies, such as parents, teachers and representatives from the local authorities. The importance of school governing bodies as a means of

²⁰³ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 5

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Griffiths Interviews – September 2014

achieving this self-management was given renewed attention in the *Better Schools* White Paper in 1985:

In the Government's view, it is now necessary to reform the composition of the governing bodies of county schools, controlled schools and maintained special schools; to define more clearly and establish more consistently the functions of these governing bodies. (DES, 1985: 63)

The DES argued that to give schools self-autonomy, the role of governing bodies in schools needed to be increased, giving them clear functions. In addition, the composition of the governing bodies needed to change to better reflect the new education partnership:

If a school is to succeed in all its tasks, it needs to have an identity and a sense of purpose of its own. It needs to recognise itself as more than an agency of the LEA. While the professionalism of its staff is a necessary condition for its success, it is not sufficient on its own. A school should serve the community from which it draws its pupils. To facilitate all these aims county, maintained special, and controlled schools have been required by the Education Acts to have governing bodies which were intended to introduce a lay element into the conduct of their affairs. (DES, 1985: 63)

In this vision, the DES argued for schools that have a sense of 'identity', more autonomy and more control over their own operations and the ability to meet the needs of the community. This reflected a break from the traditional partnership and introduced more responsiveness to the various partners involved in the conservative partnership, similar to the arguments made by the SAU and ASI in 1984 (see section 6.2.1). This was essential as the DES argued in *Better Schools* that under the existing arrangements there were a number of limitations to the effective usage of governing bodies including: limited usage of parental expertise and knowledge, the argument that establishment of "powers and duties" for governing bodies had been "piecemeal" and unclear, and the fact that local authorities had majority appointment power (DES, 1985: 64).

The DES's desire to increase parental influence in education could already be seen in efforts to increase parental choice (see Chapter 4), but there was also an interest in increasing parental influence in the control of schools, primarily through governing bodies. The role of parents in education fitted in with the idea of parental responsibility for pupils' education (see section 4.2.1). This can also be seen in Secretary of State Mark Carlisle's 1979 Conservative Party Conference speech:

In the new Education Bill shortly to be presented to Parliament, we will provide for increased parental representation on school governing boards...Education must be a partnership between the school and the home, the parent and the teacher.²⁰⁶

Carlisle indicated the importance in Conservative thinking of the variety of parental powers that the 1980 Act would extend, as well as a belief in the likely impact of parental involvement on standards ensuring consumer accountability (see section 2.4.4; Ranson, 2003). The importance of the role of parents to the Conservative Government vision of management of education was most clearly laid out by the DES in the 1984 Green Paper *Parental Influence at School*:

Parents care about their children's progress – how they develop and what they learn. They share the general desire for higher standards of education. What they do for their children at home lays the foundation for their development at school and helps to sustain it. Yet parents are not now able to contribute to that development as fully and as directly as they could and would wish...The Government now intends – while fully respecting the responsibilities of local education authorities – to extend its policies for raising standards in schools by enabling parents to improve the work of schools. (DES, 1984: 1)

The DES placed emphasis on the importance of parental involvement for ensuring consumer accountability in terms of quality; again, this is similar to the argument used by the ASI in 1984, emphasising the importance of consumer accountability to parents. The DES proposed a number of ways of removing obstacles to governing bodies not having power and ensuring parents had a role. These included allowing parents and foundation governors to make up the majority of governing bodies, and ensuring that local authorities could not 'override' the governing body decisions.

In the later *Better Schools* White Paper the parental majority was removed, but a clear emphasis was placed on the importance of strengthening the conservative partnership by ensuring "the distribution of functions between the governing body, the LEA and the headteacher" (DES, 1985: 64). The DES argued that a clear distribution of responsibilities within the educational partnership would improve quality as the partners would all take ownership over management functions. The sharing of responsibilities also ensured accountability between the different partners.

²⁰⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 21

The DES also argued that schools should serve the community and should integrate more community interests into management:

The Education Act 1980, which will be fully implemented by 1 September 1985, is making governing bodies a more effective instrument for giving each school a life of its own in the service of its local community. (DES, 1985: 63)

In the debate on the 1986 Education Act, Secretary of State Kenneth Baker talked about the importance of creating governing bodies wherein “parents and local community interests have a greater say”.²⁰⁷ He discussed again this idea of ensuring schools, and governing bodies, had a clear ‘identity’ that related to the community they served. Baker also pushed for increased involvement of industry in the management of schools:

I am particularly keen to get more business men and business women interested in the schools that serve their community... I recognise that many business people serve as school governors, but the governing body of every school should have on it someone from the local business community. Therefore, we shall introduce amendments to ensure that local industry and commerce are represented on governing bodies.²⁰⁸

The integration of more business interests into the direct management of schools was also being discussed by the SAU during the mid-1980s, particularly regarding the membership of governing bodies (see section 6.2.1). There is no direct evidence of formal references by Baker to the SAU or ASI publications; however there do seem to be commonalities in the ideas suggested externally by interested groups and those discussed by Baker in 1986 prior to the creation of the City Technology Colleges.

6.3.2 Funding of Education

Ideas about the funding of education in speeches by Conservative politicians and Department of Education and Science (DES) publications closely mirrored those within interest groups. Ideas about efficiency in education spending and obtaining value for money were prominent from 1979–1986. The idea of giving some funding oversight to governing bodies and then further devolving to the schools was also discussed. Finally, there were some discussions about the role of private funding.

²⁰⁷ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

The themes explored in this sub-section are intended to mirror the themes discussed in section 6.2.2.

Value for money and efficiency

The focus on finding ways to increase better value for money, and the efficiency of all government services, were overall Conservative aims as shown in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto (the section heading in the manifesto was even entitled “Better Value for Money”):

Any future government which sets out honestly to reduce inflation and taxation will have to make substantial economies, and there should be no doubt about our intention to do so. We do not pretend that every saving can be made without change or complaint; but if the Government does not economise the sacrifices required of ordinary people will be the greater. (Conservative Party, 1979: 5)

The idea that something would have to be done to increase efficiency in services was a concept that underlay the Conservative approach to education. Secretary of State Mark Carlisle, in his 1979 Conservative Party Conference speech, also referred to the idea of increasing the value for money in education:

We cannot go on spending more and more on public services in a non-growth economy. Unless education, without lowering standards, makes the contribution to savings in public expenditure there will be no future for our children or our children’s children.²⁰⁹

One of the key aspects he emphasised was the importance of managing costs for the education system without compromising the outputs. This argument about ensuring quality of education related to funding was very similar to arguments expressed by both the SAU and the CPSESG in the early 1980s (see section 6.2.2). Carlisle argued that finance reform in education should be focused on not just increasing resourcing but on considering how those resources were being utilised as “pouring more and more money into education as the Labour party now advocates, will not necessarily raise standards. It depends on how you spend the money.”²¹⁰ This was a regular emphasis for Carlisle throughout his tenure. In his 1980 Conservative Party Conference speech, Carlisle argued that the Conservative Government must “ensure that every penny we have to spend on education is spent to the best benefit of

²⁰⁹ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 11

²¹⁰ Ibid.

education”.²¹¹ Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson also argued in a 1982 speech that the problem of funding education was “not that of resources, the problem is to use those resources, like any good business has to do, much more effectively and efficiently than we are doing at present”.²¹² Secretary of State Keith Joseph, during his tenure at the DES, also continued to reference the idea that increasing resourcing does not “guarantee higher standards”²¹³, or outputs, but rather that education resources should be used efficiently.

Direct Funding of Schools

In the mid-1980s under Secretary of State Keith Joseph’s tenure, there was discussion about giving schools more autonomy over funding to ensure accountability and efficiency in education resource distribution. In the Green Paper *Parental Involvement in Schools*, the DES argued that this could be best done by informing governing bodies of what was being spent on the schools through annual reports, allowing governing bodies “to form a judgement on whether that expenditure was providing value for money” (DES, 1984: 23). The governing body therefore provided quality control over value for money and efficiency. The DES also proposed that some money would be allocated by the local authorities to governing bodies to “spend, at its discretion, on books, equipment and stationery” (DES, 1984: 23). In the 1985 *Better Schools* White Paper, the delegation of some portion of the funding to schools was linked to the idea of more efficient spending:

The school’s identity and sense of purpose will be enhanced and public expenditure will be deployed more effectively if each school is given a measure of delegation to spend it; and that cost-consciousness will be increased if the LEA and the school have a clear picture of the amount and purposes of the expenditure incurred for each school. (DES, 1985: 72)

The DES argued that giving the schools more direct control over aspects of their funding provided a way of dealing with the differing needs and identities of each school (see 6.3.1). In debates on the introduction of the 1986 Education Act (see section 2.4.3), Baker stated that he wanted to extend financial control of schools.²¹⁴ He stated that he wanted to build on the delegation of funding to schools that the 1986 Act had started, as well as experiments in select boroughs with fully devolved

²¹¹ CPA – NUA 2/1/84 – Carlisle, Conservative Party Conference 1980: 7

²¹² The National Archive (TNA) – ED 207/159 – Boyson, Luncheon at Bell Hotel 1982: 3

²¹³ CPA – NUA 2/1/88 – Joseph, Conservative Party Conference 1984: 21

²¹⁴ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

funding control; he argued that this was “a pattern which I would like to see extended”.²¹⁵

One means of providing greater autonomy to schools was the allocation of funding to schools based on the number of students who attended, which is called ‘per capita funding’. This gave direct control to schools over funding and also provided a form of accountability and efficiency by linking it to pupil numbers; this also links back to the idea of consumer accountability and to some of the discussions in Chapter 4. In an interview with the author, Kenneth Baker explained the benefit of per capita funding in that “you make the pupil, or the student, more important because they come in carrying money with them”.²¹⁶ This idea had similarity to the educational allowances proposed by Caroline Cox and John Marks in their 1981 publication for the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) (see section 6.2). Baker argued that per capita funding could be the first step to larger funding reform, with the usage of educational allowances or even vouchers (see section 4.2.5):

[Per capita funding] is a stepping stone to a voucher system... it was tried by Keith Joseph... and dropped. It was all too fundamental. What you have to do is make change slowly.²¹⁷

There was also a key tension in the discussion regarding what approach to take to education reform, particularly as regards funding and the speed of imposing systemic change. Baker argued that the introduction of per capita funding provided a way of gradually introducing change without overhauling the system:

You do it first with per capita, so each student is worth £5000. So when you’ve got that running for a few years, you can say why don’t you give the student the £5000 to make the decision themselves. You don’t say I’m going to give you £5000, make a decision, you’ve got to work slowly towards it.²¹⁸

This per capita funding relied on the central state to act as facilitator by providing the funding directly to the schools. The facilitator state was an underlying idea in the educational allowances suggested by the SAU and was an important function described by the Hillgate Group. Similar ideas about the desirability of school autonomy in funding and the reduced role of local authorities seem to have been expressed by external interest groups and in internal discussions.

²¹⁵ HC Deb., 10 June 1986, vol. 99, cols. 157 – 308

²¹⁶ Baker Interview – September 2014

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

Private Funding

The introduction of private sources of funding into state education was something discussed by the SAU and the Hillgate Group as a means of strengthening the role of industry and the community in the conservative education partnership (see section 6.2.2). The SAU proposed the creation of charitable foundations to manage the external funding, which provided a way of bringing in multiple interests (including industry) into the management of the funding of education. The idea of private funding did not emerge in internal government discussions from 1979 to 1986 until the discussion of City Technology Colleges, which will be discussed in the next chapter (see section 7.2.3).

The creation of a national trust to manage the financing of schools was a concept that politicians discussed in this period. As discussed by Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn in 1985, this trust was another means of facilitating autonomy of school funding. In Dunn's proposal for technology-plus schools, he referenced the role of industry in managing the trust, but not in directly contributing to funding. He proposed that funding in this case would go from the Secretary of State to a national trust, and then to the schools:

In order to eliminate local education authority control, and to obtain the consent of the business community, whilst such schools would be funded by the taxpayer, such grants as were dispensed would be through the medium of a national education trust. Composition of the trust would be strictly drawn as to reflect major interests in the business world namely CBI [Confederation of British Industry], the IOD [Institute of Directors], ICA [Institute of Chartered Accountants], Institute of Marketing et al. and the technological universities.²¹⁹

Dunn's proposal reflected ideas about the partnership of education and management of funding by working around local authorities and integrating industry into the management of education.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed research question 1, how did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science, with regard to the management and funding of education. The parallel structure and headings of

²¹⁹ TNA – ED 207/159 – Dunn, Technology-plus schools proposal 1985: 2

sections 6.2 and 6.3 emphasised the similarities in the ideas that were discussed both externally and internally. The key area of discussion regarded the change in the partnership that managed education in this period. This period represented a transition from the traditional model of partnership between the central state, local authorities and schools to a new conservative model of partnership that reduced the role of local authorities and increased the role of other interests involved in the management of schools, particularly governing bodies, parents, staff and the local community including industry. This partnership also represented changing ideas about accountability and whether responsibility should be centralised or decentralised.

Discussion of the traditional partnership model focused on concerns in the late 1970s about the central government's imposition of comprehensivisation as expressed by the *Black Paper* authors and by Secretary of State Mark Carlisle and Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson. The Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) in the early 1980s called for further re-allocation of control to the schools themselves, allowing them greater autonomy over their management and ensuring more responsive accountability to parents. Secretary of State Kenneth Baker and Minister of State Chris Patten in the mid-1980s discussed introducing more school autonomy to ensure greater responsive accountability. The final area of concern under the traditional partnership for the SAU and the Hillgate Group in the mid-1980s was that local authorities restricted the professional accountability of staff within schools to the headteachers. One solution proposed by the Hillgate Group was to increase the authority and power of headteachers. Similar sentiments were expressed by Baker in his Conservative Party Conference speech in 1986. The importance of governing bodies providing a corresponding accountability check on headteachers was also proposed by interest groups, like the SAU in the mid-1980s, and similarly expressed by Baker in his 1986 speech. Another proposal, by the SAU and the ASI in the mid-1980s was to ensure the inclusion of other interests like parents, industry and the larger community on governing bodies. This inclusion of interests allowed for consumer accountability, wherein the educational service had to respond to consumer pressure. In *Better Schools*, the DES talked about the importance of schools developing an identity to reflect the communities they served, which reflects these ideas about the composition of governing boards

and the accountability they would provide. The importance of parental responsibility and influence on education was also a key issue for the SAU and which was also seen in the 1984 DES Green Paper *Parental Influence at School*. The DES argued that parents have the ability to provide an important influence over quality which indicates consumer accountability as well. Finally, the SAU also noted that governing bodies allowed a way for industry to get involved directly in the management of education. This was also an important aspect for Baker in debates about the 1986 Bill.

The final area of discussion around the control of education in this period looked at how education should be funded and how funding should be allocated. The SAU argued that schools were not efficient in spending and were not ensuring value for money. The Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) was also particularly concerned that local authorities, but specifically the Inner London Education Authority, were not providing value for money. This was also an area of concern for the Conservative Government, as it was a theme of the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto and of both Mark Carlisle's Conservative Party Conference speeches during his tenure as Secretary of State. One means discussed of achieving better efficiency and value for money was to decentralise funding and give schools direct control, with centralisation of administration of responsibilities, making the central state the facilitator. The SAU argued for the introduction of educational allowances to provide a mechanism for autonomy of funding. They argued that this also required an important role for the central government in terms of facilitation, which was reinforced by the Hillgate Group. In successive publications in 1984 and 1985, the DES argued that schools were the best judge of their own resourcing needs, which carried over into Baker's discussion of the 1986 Education Act. Baker noted that per capita funding was a possible means of providing schools autonomy of their own funding, similar to educational allowances, in that the money was based on pupil numbers. In addition to the state-based funding sources, the SAU advocated for the introduction of more private funding into education to give industry more ownership and to allow more flexibility for schools. The SAU and the Hillgate Group argued this could be done through foundations or trusts. Private funding was not heavily discussed within the DES until 1986 and the CTC programme (see next chapter); however, in 1985 Under-Secretary of State Bob

Dunn discussed the idea of creating a national trust which would help to manage school funding and involve industry in the operation.

7. Creation of the CTCs

Introduction

This chapter draws together the analysis of the last three chapters about the discussion of educational ideas from 1979 to 1986 and the role of key actors and their agendas in this discussion. Section 7.1 looks first at the direct origins of the City Technology College (CTC) programme as described by the key actors involved, specifically how the policy was made and what elements were brought in, in order to address research question 2: what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas in this period? In order to answer this question, data is used from secondary literature sources as well as primary published sources, archival sources and interview data. Section 7.2 brings together the ideas discussed in the last three chapters: choice and diversity; aims and purposes of education; and management and funding. Using historical and interview data, this section draws together the discussions in the rest of the thesis in order to answer research question 3: how were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy? Finally, this chapter briefly considers what can be said about the understanding of the CTC historical narrative based on the findings of this work; this is explored further in the final chapter.

7.1 Making the CTC policy

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the CTC programme was introduced at the 1986 Conservative Party Conference by Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker. This section places the CTCs in context by providing a detailed timeline of the sequence of events that led to the announcement of the policy. The key figures who were involved in the creation of the policy are also introduced (expanding on section 2.5.3). The key aspects of the policy are then discussed along with an exploration of the aspects of the CTC programme that aligned with the different agendas of the key actors. This expands on the established narrative discussed earlier in the thesis (see sections 2.5.3 and 3.2) and ties together the analysis done in earlier chapters on the role of these actors and their agendas (see section 5.4). The data for this section comes from Kenneth Baker's memoir – *The Turbulent Years*, Cyril Taylor's memoir – *Sir Cyril – My Life as a Social Entrepreneur*, interviews between the author and

key figures (noted in footnotes) and selected secondary source materials. The intention of the inclusion of secondary source material in this section is to triangulate the differing accounts of the creation of the policy with the widest range of sources (see Chapter 3).

7.1.1 *Established Timeline*

Kenneth Baker replaced Keith Joseph at the Department of Education and Science (DES) on the 21st of May 1986 with Baker moving over from his position as Secretary of State for the Environment. It was in the ensuing five months that the CTC policy was developed, leading up to the Conservative Party Conference announcement of the policy on the 7th of October 1986. In his memoir, Baker noted the development of the policy began in meetings first with department officials and then with the Prime Minister in late June (Baker, 1993). Some authors indicate the discussion of other technical schools proposals, like Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's technology-plus schools, occurred prior to this period and were an influence (Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). The meetings and discussion on technology-plus schools did occur during Joseph's tenure from November 1985 through March 1986 (see section 4.3.3).

Baker stated that a number of meetings occurred over July, further developing the policy and leading to the release of an early paper: *Trust-Sponsored Secondary Schools in Inner Cities* (Baker, 1993). Ministerial colleagues were brought into the process in July to add input and the resulting proposal was brought to the full Cabinet in September (Baker, 1993). The policy was introduced at the Conservative Party Conference in October in Baker's speech on education. Alongside the conference announcement, the department published the CTC prospectus, *A New Choice of School*, as a means of recruiting industry sponsors (Baker, 1993). The prospectus was created to outline "the objectives of these new schools and the preferred locations" (Baker, 1993: 182), with the intention of encouraging industry interest in sponsoring one of the schools.

To facilitate the management of the CTC programme, particularly location of sites for the schools and recruitment of sponsors, the CTC Trust was established in 1987 (Baker, 1993; Taylor, 2013). Cyril Taylor, a director at the Centre for Policy Studies

(CPS) and an advocate of technical schools throughout the mid-1980s (see Chapter 5), was brought in to head the trust and begin the recruitment of sponsors (see section 2.5.3). The funding and governance structures for the CTCs were further developed in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

7.1.2 Key Figures

The key actors in the production of the policy, alongside Secretary of State Kenneth Baker and the Department of Education and Science civil servants, were those mentioned by Baker in his memoir as those who were in attendance at July 1986 meetings in the DES to develop the CTC policy: “Chris Patten, Bob Dunn and George Walden, together with our PPS [permanent parliamentary secretaries], Alistair Burt and Virginia Bottomley, and Tony [Kerpel]” (Baker, 1993: 180). The ministers all served under both Keith Joseph and Baker during their tenures as Secretary of State for Education. Chris Patten was Minister of State from 5th of September 1985 until the 10th of September 1986.²²⁰ Bob Dunn was the Under-Secretary of State for Schools from 13th June 1983 (replacing Rhodes Boyson) until the 25th of July 1988. George Walden was Under-Secretary for Further and Higher Education from 13th of June 1983 until the 13th of June 1987. In terms of advisers, Tony Kerpel was Baker’s political adviser, replacing Stuart Sexton who had held the position for Joseph. Baker also noted the importance of feedback and guidance from the Prime Minister on this policy as well as Brian Griffiths, Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit (1985–1990), who had helped Baker in the early negotiation of his role at the DES (Baker, 1993).

7.1.3 Politicians’ Agendas

As briefly mentioned at the beginning of the thesis (see Chapter 1), the proposed CTCs were secondary schools with a specialist focus in technology as well as a broad curriculum, located in inner cities to increase choice and diversity in education, independent from local authority control, and run in part by sponsors who contributed to the cost (DES, 1986). The linkages between these key aspects and the ideas and proposals from the last three chapters will be discussed later in the chapter (see section 7.2). The current section will rely on interviews with key actors carried

²²⁰ He was replaced by Angela Rumbold, who held the position from September until the 24th of July 1990 and was responsible for much of the implementation of the policy.

out by the author thirty years after the event; this was triangulated with accounts from memoirs and secondary literature. The purpose of this section is to address research question 2 on the agendas of actors in the context of this policy. This section brings together discussion from across the thesis of the different agendas of various politicians that influenced the direction of the CTCs and rationales for their support of different elements.

Prime Minister and Number 10 Policy Unit

In terms of involvement from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the Number 10 Policy Unit, the movement away from local authority control was considered an important part of the Prime Minister's vision for education:

The Prime Minister's antipathy towards them [local authorities] was well known, and the head of her Policy Unit at that time (Brian Griffiths) was credited with a strong belief that education would be much the better being subject to the free play of supply and demand. (Whitty, Edwards, & Gewirtz, 1993: 23)

Thatcher's interest in this independence of schools from local authority influenced her support especially of two key areas of the CTC initiative: the impact on quality of education and the accountability mechanism. The first reason for the Prime Minister's support, according to Secretary of State Kenneth Baker, was that the CTCs provided a way to improve standards in education that the local authorities had not been able to achieve:

She [the Prime Minister] liked the whole idea of the City Technology College because it was independent of local authorities and she knew the local authorities in many cases were very poor providers of education.²²¹

The second reason for her support of the initiative, according to the Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, Brian Griffiths, was that CTCs provided an alternative to the way schools were managed and funded in the state sector:

The way I used to explain to Mrs Thatcher was: Prime Minister, we have a system of local authorities in Britain, they own the schools, they plan for the schools, they control everything that happens within the schools, they fix the compensation of everyone who is employed in schools, they decide on new schools and closing old schools. This is like a bunch of Soviet republics; we have in Britain effectively a bunch of Soviet republics, and the whole thing needs to be opened up.²²²

²²¹ Baker Interview – September 2014

²²² Griffiths Interview – September 2014

In short, the interest from the Prime Minister in CTCs was related to a belief that it would open up the state system by: reducing local authority control, improving standards and giving more autonomy to the schools (this links to discussions in section 7.2.3).

Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Secretaries of State

Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's priorities for the CTC programme focused on his existing interest in technology (see section 5.4) and a desire to create a curriculum related to working life with active input from employers and industry (Baker, 1993). He also noted the importance of encouraging a "greater diversity of schooling provision" as well as giving "power towards the parents and children who were the consumers of education" (Baker, 1993: 177). He also wanted the schools to act "as beacons of excellence and exemplar models for what could be done in other state schools" (Baker, 1993: 178). He argued that more could be done in education if schools were given more autonomy and if management by local authorities was reduced. Finally, Baker stated in his memoir that he had a social aim for the CTCs. He drew a parallel to the importance of magnet schools in the USA for urban renewal. He felt that the CTCs could help contribute to breaking cycles of deprivation in inner cities (Baker, 1993). To this end he felt it was important to ensure that the CTCs had a strong connection to the communities in which they were based (Baker, 1993). Beyond the inclusion of the above priorities, other researchers note that many of the key figures (Bob Dunn, Cyril Taylor and Baker himself) argued that one of Baker's key contributions was the introduction of a private sponsorship element to the funding of the schools (Whitty et al., 1993). Baker argued that a sponsorship element would show particular commitment from industry to education (Whitty et al., 1993).

In terms of ministerial priorities, Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's interest in specialist schools was also discussed in previous chapters in regard to his proposals for technology-plus schools (see section 4.3.2) and his particular interest in technology (see section 5.4). Dunn referenced many similar priorities for his proposed technology-plus schools to those expressed by Baker for CTCs: independence from local authorities, the creation of centres of excellence, specialist

focus in technology without compromising breadth of curriculum, and an inclusion of funding from industry. As Dunn said of his role in the creation of the CTC policy:

I felt then that there'd be industrial involvement and people would be seconded from firms to argue and debate and teach marketing, economic and industrial practices and that sort of thing and then – that was my original thought. (Whitty et al., 1993: 21)

The ministers, therefore, seemed to provide input on the components that were introduced into the CTC policy. Baker noted that in his meeting in July 1986 with his ministers Chris Patten, Bob Dunn and George Walden, many of the key structural elements of the CTC programme were set:

We agreed that the objectives of the scheme [CTC programme] were to set up schools outside LEA control; to establish the principle of contracts and per capita funding; and to deal with the problems of inner-city youth. (Baker, 1993: 180)

Thus, ministers had a role in deciding which aspects of proposals were integrated into the final CTC scheme. Dunn's particular interest in technology and his specialist school proposal may also have been important in starting the discussion of the ideas that underlay the CTCs.

This concludes the discussion relevant to research question 2 about the agendas of different actors and how that may have influenced their selection of ideas. The chapter now turns to research question 3 and the influence of discussion of ideas about education that underlay the CTCs.

7.2 CTCs and the Development of Ideas

This section looks at the relationship between the various ideas that went into the CTC policy and how those related to the larger discussions of ideas and policies from 1979 to 1986. This section will link back to ideas discussed in the last three chapters (Chapters 4–6) to see how many of those ideas can be seen in the CTC policy in order to address research question 3: how were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy? This section uses a combination of primary and secondary source material; primary material includes: memoirs, interest group pamphlets, government documents, archival materials and interviews (the latter two noted in footnotes).

7.2.1 *Choice and Diversity*

The CTC programme was an important project in changing the way choice and diversity were integrated into government policy. This section talks about how the CTCs related to ideas about choice and diversity discussed by interest groups external to the government and those discussed within the Conservative Government and the Department of Education and Science from 1979 to 1986.

Ideas about choice and diversity

As was discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.1.1), there was an idea of a ‘crisis’ in education amongst the conservative thinkers that required active involvement of government to tackle some of the underlying issues, as “there were strikes in so many schools and there was a lot of division among academics, among teachers, among commentators, among politicians over the way forward”.²²³ Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker argued that it was this environment that provided him with an opportunity to make substantial changes in education policy, as “there comes a time when change has to happen. And I was lucky in that by mid-1980s something had to happen.”²²⁴ The whole structure of the system was perceived as having to shift and one of the key areas where that needed to occur was in terms of the choice and diversity of schools; as Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, Brian Griffiths argued, “there wasn’t enough choice, there weren’t different kinds of schools and so on.”²²⁵ He also shared the concern expressed in the *Black Papers* (see section 4.1.1) of an ‘egalitarian’ ethos impacting education standards. In the launching of the CTCs, Baker again emphasised an aim to develop “the highest possible standards of achievement”²²⁶ in pupils. As noted in section 7.1.1, alongside the announcement by Baker, the DES released a prospectus for future sponsors that stated that the “government’s central aim for school education” was “to improve standards in schools” which would be better served by an active role for parents:

The Government believes that this aim will be achieved more quickly and more effectively if parents have a greater say in, and can feel more responsible for, their children’s education. Such responsibilities can be exercised more effectively if parents have greater choice about their children’s school and about the nature of the education they receive. (DES, 1986: 3)

²²³ Griffiths Interview – September 2014

²²⁴ Baker Interview – September 2014

²²⁵ Griffiths Interview – September 2014

²²⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive (CPA) – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 10

The role of parental choice in driving up standards was an idea discussed consistently in the *Black Papers* and by *Black Paper* editor and Under-Secretary of State for Schools Rhodes Boyson in the late 1970s (see section 4.1.1 and 4.2.1).

‘Freedom of choice’ was frequently used by the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) to indicate that individuals should be given a freedom to exercise choice in education (see section 4.1.2). The idea of returning ‘personal freedom’ was also expressed in the 1983 Conservative Party Manifesto (see section 4.2.2). These were ideas that appear again in the introduction of the CTC programme. In specific, Baker referenced this idea of ensuring freedom to choose and to take individual action in the speech that launched the CTC programme:

We see education as a springboard for individualism, opportunity and liberty. By creating opportunities for the child it confers freedom of choice and action for the young adult.²²⁷

Here Baker referenced the importance of providing opportunities for pupils as a way of ensuring freedom of choice. In the same speech, he also expressed concern over the ‘threat of egalitarianism’ wherein, according to Baker, there was no focus on the individual. Similar arguments about the importance of addressing the needs of the individual over ‘uniformity’ and ‘socialist control’ were used by the CPSESG (see section 4.1.2). Baker also drew on the Conservative vision of a system of education that traditionally focused on the potential of the individual pupil that was expressed by Secretary of State Mark Carlisle in 1981 (see section 4.2.3). This also tied into arguments that education should be ‘differentiated’ to better meet the variety of pupils’ needs (see section 4.1.3 and 4.2.3). Baker used language that emphasised choice for the ‘user’ as opposed to the choices of the ‘producer’:

Education can no longer be led by the producers – by the academic theorists, the administrators or even the teachers’ unions. Education must be shaped by the users – by what is good for the individual child and what hopes are held by their parents.²²⁸

The idea of making education more responsive to users, or consumers, as opposed to the producers reflects the language used in publications from 1982–1984 by the CPSESG, the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) (see section 4.1.2).

²²⁷ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 1

²²⁸ Ibid.

The focus on the role of parents as engaged users can be seen in the rationale for using parental engagement as a factor for determining whether a pupil should be allowed to attend the CTCs (DES, 1986).²²⁹ This also links to the discussion over the responsibility parents have for the education of their child which Carlisle addressed in 1980 (see section 4.2.2).²³⁰ The idea of empowering parents to take responsibility for their children's education existed in both CPSESG discussions in 1981 and in discussions between the Prime Minister and the Number 10 Policy Unit in 1982 (see sections 4.1.2 and 4.2.2). Baker stated in an interview with the author that this was also an aspect of the CTCs that "you were empowering them [parents] and that is important".²³¹

Mechanisms to enhance choice and diversity

Many of the mechanisms that were proposed to achieve choice and diversity in education were used in the CTCs. The voucher and the ideas behind it discussed by interest groups (see section 4.1.4) were brought into policy discussions about activating choice (see section 4.2.5). Many of the reforms under the 1988 Education Reform Act, and those that created the CTCs, could be argued to be ways of overcoming previous barriers to the creation of a national voucher scheme that the civil service had outlined during Secretary of State Keith Joseph's tenure (lack of capacity, control or funding -- see section 4.2.5).²³² This could be seen in direct contracting for funding between schools and the DES (see Chapter 6 and section 7.2.1) and the creation of surplus places through more in-sector diversity of provision (see section 4.3). In an interview with the author Baker said of the economics of the CTCs:

It [CTC programme] was creating supply and demand in the education system and not just concentrating on supply... the demand comes from the

²²⁹ One of the suggested criteria for admittance to CTCs listed in the prospectus was based "on parents' commitment to full-time education or training up to the age of 18, to the distinctive characteristics of the CTC curriculum, and to the ethos of the CTC" (DES, 1986: 5).

²³⁰ Responsibility was also one of the qualities that policymakers wanted CTCs to develop in pupils, particularly in preparation for roles in later life (DES, 1986).

²³¹ Baker Interview – September 2014

²³² As stated in section 4.2.5, the civil service had argued that the barriers to implementing an effective voucher scheme were: the structure of the system which had limited capacity (in terms of school places that would be available to allow flexible transfer between schools); education funding allocations were made by local authorities to schools (schools lacked autonomy over their own funding so there was no incentive to compete); and parents had no control over funding (systems would need to be created to allocate funds to parents under a voucher scheme).

students and the parents. And I was always appealing to the parents as education secretary.²³³

In terms of building more capacity, Baker acknowledged the extension of choice that had been generated through mechanisms like the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) (see section 4.2.4), but he argued that more in-sector diversity was needed (Baker, 1993). One of the key ideas in discussion was maintaining between-sector diversity through policies like the APS (see section 4.2.6). The aim of increasing between-sector diversity was not strictly an element of the CTC programme, but it was a consideration for Baker at the time. In his memoir, Baker discussed increasing between-sector diversity in education in a similar sense to how it had been done in other policy areas:

I felt that education was in a similar position to that of housing twenty years earlier. Ninety-three per cent of children attended state schools while 7 per cent were in the independent sector. There was a small island of private education alongside a greater continent of state education, and I wanted to provide between them new areas of wider choice. (Baker, 1993: 177)

The intention was that the CTCs would be unique in curriculum, structure and construction to other state-funded schools. In curriculum terms, the schools would have a specialism in technology which would introduce in-sector diversity (see sections 4.1.5, 2.2.6 and 4.3). The structure was intended to be different from other state schools, with longer terms and school days as well as work experience for pupils (DES, 1986: 7). The schools would also be constructed with extensive “Information Technology hardware and software on a scale more extensive than is normal in the maintained sector” (DES, 1986: 7). In his memoir, Baker talked about the CTCs functioning as “beacons of excellence” in the state sector (Baker, 1993), much the same as the specialist comprehensives suggested by Caroline Cox and John Marks of the CPSESG acting as ‘centres of excellence’ (see section 4.3.1).

The stated goal for the CTC programme was to establish schools in areas, specifically the inner city, where Conservative politicians felt poorer pupils were not receiving the best educational opportunities (DES, 1986). The relationship between urban centres and choice and diversity of provision was an interesting link between the CTCs and earlier specialist school proposals (see section 4.3). In his 1986

²³³ Baker Interview – September 2014

Conservative Party Conference speech, Baker emphasised the urgency of need within inner cities for more diversity of provision to facilitate choice:

It is in our cities that the education system faces its greatest challenges. Many parents, despite the pressures of daily living, want the best for their children. It is the task of our Government to meet these aspirations. We believe there is an urgent need to create more choice in educational provision, to broaden the range of educational opportunity in urban areas.²³⁴

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher echoed the same language and justification for the launch of the programme in her Party Conference speech of that year.²³⁵ Similar language was also referenced in Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson's proposal for specialist schools in 1982 (see section 4.3.2), and many of the early specialist schools proposals argued that cities were the most able to sustain a variety in schools because there was higher demand (see section 4.3). The decision to place the CTCs in urban areas was also part of a larger "social aim" for Baker, as stated in his memoir:

In the United States, the Magnet Schools programme was revitalising education in rundown inner city areas... The cycle of poverty and despair was being broken by the setting up of special magnet schools where an ethos of pride and discipline had done much to restore confidence among children and parents. Although British cities did not display the same extremes of the problems one could see in American cities, I was nevertheless concerned about the phenomenon of the middle-class drift to suburban schools which left inner-city schools with an increasingly problematic pupil population. That was why the primary locations for CTCs were to be in selected disadvantaged inner-city areas. (Baker, 1993: 178-9)

This linked to another Conservative idea for education, that of providing opportunities ('ladders of opportunity') for the most able pupils (see section 4.2.4). It also linked to discussions of selection by ability.

With proposed admission criteria for CTCs there was also a certain strand of desire for some sort of selection or differentiation. In Baker's 1986 speech he talked about "girls and boys of all abilities and backgrounds"²³⁶ benefitting from CTCs. Baker also discussed the importance of seeing "children of our inner cities presented with

²³⁴ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 9

²³⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Thatcher, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 5 "Why are we setting up new kinds of schools in our towns and cities? To create privilege? No. To give families in some of our inner cities greater choice in the education of their children."

²³⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 10

challenge, not condemned to mediocrity”.²³⁷ However, the prospectus also outlined a number of criteria under which pupils would be selected to attend CTCs which included general aptitude (“progress and achievements in primary school”), “readiness to take advantage of the type of education offered in CTCs”, and parental commitment (DES, 1986: 5).²³⁸ The element of selection for ‘specialist schools’, particularly based on subject aptitude, was also referenced in the models proposed by consecutive Under-Secretaries of State Rhodes Boyson and Bob Dunn (see section 4.3.2). As Baker said, there was an element of selection in the CTCs by having some of these admission criteria:

We weren’t allowed to select of course, though we were allowed to interview. That was quite important, the parents and the student. And I think in terms of aptitude. So there was a very mild form of selection to begin with which eventually had to disappear. There was a mild form of selection.²³⁹

In effect this meant that the choice of school was not necessarily always that of the user (i.e. pupils or parents); there was a selection process involved in CTCs. This was also a concern that had been raised by civil servants regarding the implementation of possible specialist schools (see section 4.3.3).

7.2.1 Aims and Purposes of Education

The content and structure of the CTCs in many ways appeared to be a distillation of ideas about the aims and purposes of education that were discussed in this period amongst conservative interest groups and politicians. Using the framework from Chapter 5, it is possible to see how the CTCs directly reflected Conservative views about the social and economic aims and purposes of education.

Social Aims

Members of the CPSESG and the *Black Paper* authors were concerned about the influence of ‘egalitarianism’ and ‘political indoctrination’ on school curriculums, and they wanted to ensure that education had the ‘right ethos’ (see section 5.2.1). Secretary of State Kenneth Baker also shared this concern that the education system should serve the ‘right’ aims, not just those of egalitarianism. He expressed these

²³⁷ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 12

²³⁸ “The composition of their [CTCs] intake will be representative of the community they serve. They will not be neighbourhood schools taking all comers; nor will they be expected to admit children from outside the catchment area. Their admission procedures and catchment areas will need to be defined in such a way as to give scope for selecting pupils from a number of applicants.” (DES, 1986: 5)

²³⁹ Baker Interview – September 2014

concerns when he announced the CTC programme in his 1986 Conservative Party Conference speech, stating that “socialists see education as a means of social engineering...for us, education must fulfil the individual’s potential, not stifle it in the name of egalitarianism.”²⁴⁰ The CTC programme instead sought to focus on the creation of good adult citizens. In the programme prospectus developed in 1986, the DES made direct links to discussions about the aims of creating good citizens expressed in the 1985 White Paper *Better Schools* (see also section 5.3.1). This reflected the discussions during Keith Joseph’s tenure as Secretary of State about the type of citizen that schools should be helping to create (see section 5.3.1). In the CTC prospectus, the DES argued that government’s aim for education, and therefore for the CTCs, included ensuring schools helped “young people to become responsible and law-abiding citizens” (DES, 1986: 3); this borrowed directly from the *Better Schools* White Paper. The prospectus further stated that the CTC curriculum would help students prepare for “the responsibilities of citizenship” (DES, 1986: 10). Therefore, schools should focus on the development of ‘law-abiding’ and ‘responsible’ citizens rather than focusing on more egalitarian aims.

The question of the right ethos of education also linked to the ideas expressed by Under-Secretary of State for Schools Rhodes Boyson in 1980 about pupils needing to access the correct ‘body of knowledge’ to communicate the ‘common culture’ (see section 5.3.1). This was again reflected in the language of the prospectus, which described the programme’s commitment to “developing the qualities” which “young people” will need for citizenship (DES, 1986: 4). In the creation of the CTCs, politicians aimed for a balance between providing specialist curriculum elements that prepared pupils for work, and breadth in the curriculum in the form of traditional liberal education to prepare them for adult life:

They [CTCs] will offer a broad curriculum, with the strong technical and practical element which is essential preparation for the changing demands of adult and working life in an advanced industrial society. (DES, 1986: 4)

This dual intention can also be seen in Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, Brian Griffiths’ views of the aims of education, expressed in an interview with the author:

I think teaching people the value of culture, literature and the arts, religion, philosophy. I think one wants to be very careful before one becomes too

²⁴⁰ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Conservative Party Conference 1986: 1

focused just on technical education. I think there's a strong argument to be made for a liberal education.²⁴¹

This issue was prominent in early proposals for specialist schools and in the civil service response to these proposals (see Section 4.3.3). The CTCs attempted to walk this line, ensuring that the curriculum would be both practical and 'balanced', allowing for the rounded development of pupils as adults through a traditional liberal education. Griffiths referenced many of these aspects in his reflection on the Prime Minister's key interests in education in this period:

I think she thought education reform, improving the chance of an aspirational parent having a school for their children, or child. Which would really help them...in terms of understanding the world, appreciating the world, the arts and so on. I think that was the thing that really motivated her...the core of it was, improving people's sort of wellbeing in life, through improved education."²⁴²

Griffiths' interpretation of the Prime Minister's aims for education includes goals of improving pupils' understanding of the world and an appreciation of common culture.

Preparing the pupil with broader knowledge was an essential aim of the CTCs, which reflected earlier discussions in the DES, seen for example in Minister of State for Schools Rhodes Boyson's argument for a curriculum that "impart[s] values" to pupils in the types of knowledge they should have access to such as "art, music, religion, philosophy and literature" (see section 5.3.2). The idea of the type of citizen that the CTCs wanted to create tied into the promotion of "shared values" as stated in the *Black Papers* and the reinforcement of "moral standards" and "respect for British institutions" in curriculums, as set out by the Hillgate Group (see section 5.2.1). This can also be seen in Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's view of Conservative education policies in the 1986 speech, when he said, "I want to see the children taught to respect authority in a moral and disciplined framework."²⁴³ Baker emphasised the idea of "moral education" and the impact on pupil behaviour which linked to key ideas in *The School Curriculum* (see section 5.3.1). In addition to ensuring the right values, one of the aims of the CTCs was to ensure the

²⁴¹ Griffiths Interview – September 2014

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 11

transmission of the right skills and attitudes. This tied into ideas about the important development of both “intellectual and practical skills” mentioned by members of the CPSESG (see section 5.2.1). The skills and attitudes focus can be seen in the CTC prospectus which outlined a curriculum that places a “strong emphasis on self-discipline and positive attitudes” (DES, 1986: 7).

Economic Aims

As discussed by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), from the late 1970s into the mid-1980s industry was very concerned that schools were not preparing pupils with the ‘basic skills’ necessary for future employment (see section 5.2.2). The basic skills discussions tended to focus on improving literacy and numeracy, which had been an early aim in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto (see Section 5.3.2). In Secretary of State Kenneth Baker’s 1986 Party Conference speech, he emphasised that he “want[ed] to see the basic elements of education, the three Rs, restored to their central place in the curriculum”.²⁴⁴ The CTCs as proposed by Baker would give attention to the teaching of the basics in schools to address the gap in skills. The issue of basic skills was particularly important given the concern by employers about the role of a skilled workforce in ensuring economic competitiveness. The CPS and the Hillgate Group were particularly concerned about lagging behind other countries with more comprehensive technological education, such as Germany (see section 5.2.2). This focus on economic competition and the value of education in an “increasingly competitive world economy” was also an aspect of Conservative education policy expressed in the 1981 White Paper *The School Curriculum* (see section 5.3.2). In the speech that launched the CTCs, Baker discussed building an education system to encourage pupils to stay in school until the age of 18, as he argued that “a better educated nation is a more prosperous nation”.²⁴⁵ He made a clear link between the economic competitiveness of the country and an educated workforce.

In the mid-1980s, the CBI called for greater involvement of employers in school-based learning (see section 5.2.2) and similar arguments were made by the DES in

²⁴⁴ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 11

²⁴⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 12

support of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (see section 5.3.2). In the CTC prospectus, the DES argued that the CTCs could serve as a way of building on the groundwork of TVEI in order to bring more employers into education:

The Government believes that there is, in the business community and elsewhere, a widespread wish to help extend the range of choice for families in urban areas. What is required is a programme which builds upon the lessons of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative and of successful secondary schools generally. (DES, 1986: 3).

The DES made the connection between earlier initiatives to include industry and a desire coming from business to be more involved in education. Given that support for the TVEI was far from universal, it seems likely that the motivation from industry was less of a driving force than the interest from policymakers within the DES. However, the purpose of education expressed in this case linked what was taught in the “class room” with “employers’ needs” as Minister of State for Education Baroness Young suggested in 1979 (see section 5.3.2). One of the key purposes of the CTCs was to provide industry with a means of investing in the future, both of the individual pupils but also of the larger communities:

Promoters will be making a long-term investment in the adult and working population of the future. Their reward will be richer opportunities for good education in the cities and an enhanced contribution to the vigour and prospects of the communities there. (DES, 1986: 6)

This linked to the social aim that Secretary of State Kenneth Baker claimed he had for the CTCs, urban redevelopment. In his memoir, he talked about the role CTCs should play in the larger community:

We also wanted CTCs to be involved in the wider community through the provision of adult education, skills training, recreation and sports facilities after schools hours. CTCs should be seen as resources for all the people living in an area. In this way they would give a positive incentive to people to continue living in the urban locale of a CTC rather than moving away. (Baker, 1993: 179)

The role of the CTCs was then to provide a means for employers and industry to invest in the human capital of its workforce by enriching urban centres across England.

One of the other intentions of the CTCs was to provide pupils with a curriculum that prepared them for the “changing world” as adult workers. In the prospectus, the

DES noted that a key aspect of the CTC curriculum was that “doing and understanding as well as knowing will be emphasised throughout” (DES, 1986: 7). In specific terms, Baker stated that one of the key distinctive elements of the CTCs was that the curriculum offered in these schools had “a strong emphasis on technological, scientific and practical work, business studies and design”.²⁴⁶ Baker thought that pupils would gain exposure to the world of work and be prepared with the necessary knowledge to be good workers. The DES also stated that the schools would have a practical element of “work experience” which would “also form an integral part of education at a CTC” (DES, 1986: 7). The CPS and SAU, in 1984 and 1985, also discussed the importance of including some practical skills and manual work in the content of school curriculum (see section 5.2.2). Baker said that elements like “work readiness” had an important place in the curriculum of the CTCs:

Work readiness was very much the concept of CTCs because they were connected to companies and we’d get companies to come in and talk to the staff or they’d go to pupils and be able to visit the companies and that sort of thing. It was easier to do with a CTC than a normal school.²⁴⁷

Baker felt that the CTCs would give pupils access to industry to gain concrete knowledge of the experience of working life. This also linked to discussion of transferable skills and Baroness Young calling for schools to provide pupils with the ability to be “flexible and adaptable in the world of work” (see Section 5.3.2).²⁴⁸ That same language used in *Better Schools* was also used in the CTC prospectus, which proposed that the curriculum prepare pupils “to bring enterprise, versatility and application to their employment” (DES, 1986: 3). The DES advocated for the development of the “qualities of enterprise, self-reliance and responsibility which young people need for adult life and work” (DES, 1986: 4). In speeches in the early 1980s, Secretary of State Mark Carlisle mentioned self-reliance as a key idea (see section 5.3.2).

7.2.2 *Management and Funding*

The CTCs reflected ideas about the changing nature of the partnership that managed education and the funding that facilitated it. The CTCs were the embodiment of the

²⁴⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 10

²⁴⁷ Baker Interview – September 2014

²⁴⁸ CPA – NUA 2/1/83 – Young, Conservative Party Conference 1979: 3

new conservative partnership in education, with a focus on those who benefitted most directly from education having the most active role in controlling that education – parents, headteachers, the community and industry. The central state took on a facilitator role to ensure financial accountability, efficiency and value for money in the schools.

Management

In the transition from the traditional management model of education to the new conservative model there was a shift in ideas about the role of local authorities. In the late 1970s both the *Black Papers* and the speeches of Secretary of State Mark Carlisle were concerned about the impact of the perceived imposition of comprehensivisation on local authority freedom to make decisions about how local needs were met (see sections 6.2.1 and 6.3.1). These arguments seemed not to acknowledge the role of many local authorities in pursuing comprehensivisation prior to the strong push from the DES through the 1976 Act (see Chapter 2). By the mid-1980s, interest group publications from the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) and the Hillgate Group as well as parliamentary speeches by Minister of State Chris Patten and Secretary of State Kenneth Baker indicated increased movement away from local authority control to more autonomy for the schools (see sections 6.2.1 and 6.3.1). Discussions in this period brought into question which partners were best placed to serve local needs, which was reflected in Baker's 1986 Conservative Party Conference speech:

I've always believed that in our society more ought to be done at the rim of the wheel and less at the hub. Local Authorities may be nearer to the rim than is the Secretary of State. But they are not at the rim. At the outer-ridge are the schools and colleges.²⁴⁹

In the end the CTCs were the distillation of these ideas about partnership in management regarding the role of local authorities and schools, as the "CTCs will be a distinct category of provision within the education system. They will not be answerable to LEAs." (DES, 1986: 9) Baker noted the importance of CTCs for Conservative policy about the management of education going forward into the 1988 Education Reform Act:

²⁴⁹ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986 : 2

Together with the fact that these schools [CTCs] were to be independent of the LEAs it is clear that the thinking and discussions about CTCs broke crucial ground for some of the main changes eventually included in the Education Reform Act. (Baker, 1993: 181)

The CTCs were the beginning of the later significant movement to give more autonomy directly to the schools, which was an important component of the conservative partnership in education.

The discussion of the new conservative partnership also included ideas about the roles of headteachers and governing bodies. This was one of the aspects of the Number 10 Policy Unit's "10-point plan for education" in the mid-1980s, intended to increase the responsibility of headteachers and governing bodies within schools (see section 6.3.1). The Hillgate Group, in 1986, also discussed the importance of the role of headteachers, arguing that it was essential that headteachers have basic control over staffing and the 'ethos' of their school (see section 6.2.1). In Baker's 1986 speech, he also reflected this sentiment, stressing the importance of heads to the success of the education system.²⁵⁰ In his vision of education going into the 1987 General Election, Baker wanted the Conservative Party to build "on our Education Bill"²⁵¹ which included "increasing the authority of headteachers".²⁵²

The importance of the role of governing bodies was also a growing focus in this period, partially as a way of increasing the role of industry as expressed by the SAU (see section 6.2.1), but also as a means of truly reflecting the communities the schools served as argued in *Better Schools* (section 6.3.1). Both of these elements were reflected in how Baker envisioned the role of governing bodies in this period. In his 1986 speech, he called for more involvement of industry in governing bodies with "more businessmen and businesswomen coming forward as governors. They have a lot to offer our schools."²⁵³ He furthermore called for more community involvement on governing bodies as "it's up to people all over the country and to you, your friends and neighbours to respond by coming forward as governors to assume greater responsibility".²⁵⁴ CTCs were intended to have a very strong role for governing bodies, who would have control and authority over staffing and funding

²⁵⁰ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 5

²⁵¹ The 1968 Education (No. 2) Act

²⁵² CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 11

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3

(DES, 1986). It was also notable that the CTCs were intended to be a mechanism for community engagement as noted by the DES in the CTC prospectus:

The Secretary of State will encourage the Governing Bodies of CTCs to share their building and facilities, as far as is practicable, with pupils from other schools and to make them available to the wider community outside school hours. (DES, 1986: 9)

This also reflected ideas about who the CTCs would benefit, and what roles the schools and sponsors should play in the larger community.

As set out in mid-1980s DES policy documents, *Parental Influence in Schools* and *Better Schools*, there was also a desire to have a good amount of parental representation on governing bodies (see section 6.3.1). Also in the mid-1980s, interest groups like the SAU, ASI and the Hillgate Group all emphasised the importance of the role of parents in the management of education (see section 6.2.1). In his 1986 speech, Baker stated that in his vision of education going forward into the 1987 election, “there will be more parent governors elected by all the parents”.²⁵⁵ The role of parents in the educational partnership also extended to the commitment of parents to their children’s education in terms of their commitment to ideas such as responsibility, discussed earlier (see section 7.3.1). The engagement of parents and their commitment were highlighted by the DES in the prospectus as influences on the selection criteria for admission to CTCs:

Parents’ commitment to full-time education or training up to the age of 18, to the distinctive characteristics of the CTC curriculum, and to the ethos of the CTC. As described below, education in a CTC will demand considerable effort from pupils and from their parents. (DES, 1986: 5)

Parental involvement in the educational partnership of CTCs was seen through participation on governing bodies and taking responsibility for supporting pupils admitted to CTCs.

In all these aspects, the CTCs reflected many of the concepts discussed throughout this period on how the partnership in education should be constructed: a reduced role of local authorities, renewal of the importance of the role for headteachers, strong and active governing bodies that reflected the community and local business

²⁵⁵ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986: 2

interests, and a role for parents. The next section will focus on the role of funding in this new partnership.

Funding

‘Value for money’ and ‘efficiency’ were key ideas in discussions of funding in this period, expressed by both the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) in the early 1980s (see section 6.2.2), and were also present in the Conservative Government thinking as can be seen in the 1979 Manifesto (see section 6.3.2). The CTCs also reflected these ideas. In the prospectus, the Department of Education and Science (DES) used the same ideas and language expressed in the *Better Schools* document which included, as part of the Government’s aim for education, “using the available resources to yield the best possible return” (DES, 1986: 3). The concept of efficiency was also expressed in an interesting way by Secretary of State Kenneth Baker in his memoir. He discussed the importance of the CTCs operating efficiently as a justification for the success of the initiative:

For the CTC experiment to work it was vital that CTCs should not be accorded such favourable treatment that success could easily be dismissed by opponents with, ‘Oh, we could have achieved the same results if only we had the same amount of money or were able to select pupils.’ From the start of the CTC initiative I fully understood that CTCs’ running costs could not be funded at a level greater than that of comparable LEA schools. The importance of the CTC pilots was what they *did* with the money received for their running costs, which would be broadly the same level as that for other LEA schools. (Baker, 1993: 178)

Baker argued that the success of the CTC programme relied on showing that state schools could be run “efficiently” and “effectively”. This meant that CTCs needed to have the same resourcing (running costs) as other state schools. He argued that in the implementation, it needed to be clear that if resources were held constant, the CTCs could achieve greater value for money than other schools. Baker discounted the impact of selection by aptitude noted by critics which, as discussed early in this chapter (see section 7.3.2), was an aspect of CTC admissions.

Another means of ensuring financial accountability of schools to the users in terms of value for money was through linking funding of education to pupil attendance. There were a number of means of facilitating this linkage that were suggested

throughout the period, including educational allowances by the CPSESG and per capita funding (see section 6.2.2 and 6.3.2) as well as vouchers (see section 7.3.1). The CTCs seemed to reflect these ideas, as the grants from the government to the schools were based on a per capita funding model:

The Secretary of State will pay the CTCs' running costs in accordance with the number of pupils, at a level of assistance per pupil comparable with what is provided by LEAs for maintained schools serving similar catchment areas. (DES, 1986: 6)

This provided a means of both giving the schools more direct control, an important aspect discussed next, and also allowing a type of accountability to ensure they provided a quality service that would attract prospective pupils. This pupil-based funding introduced financial accountability into the educational partnership. This created a type of quasi-voucher where money followed the pupils, which gave weight to parental choices about education.

The idea of per capita funding providing any financial accountability relied on schools having autonomy over their own funding. One of the aspects Baker highlighted in his 1986 Party Conference speech was “shifting more spending to the school”.²⁵⁶ Efficiency was also used in the *Better Schools* White Paper as a rationale for schools having direct control over their own funding (see section 6.3.2). This was based on schools being the best judge of their needs, their pupils' needs and the community's needs. In the case of the CTCs, the original conception was that the sponsors and governing bodies in general would have a large role in making decisions about financing within schools, including decisions about hiring and pay of staff:

The promoters will own (or lease) the CTCs, and run them. They will be responsible for employing teachers and other staff. Their grant from the Secretary of State will be paid on conditions agreed with him. (DES, 1986: 6)

The direct contract relationship would in theory eliminate a layer of bureaucracy that had previously existed with local authorities; this would again provide more accountability in education funding.

²⁵⁶ CPA – NUA 2/1/90 – Baker, Conservative Party Conference 1986 : 11

The role of the central state was also a key aspect of this funding arrangement, with the state acting as facilitator for the schools, or as the Hillgate Group described it, “mediator and stimulator” (see section 6.2.2). The CTCs had a direct contractual relationship between the central state and schools regarding allocation of funding. The idea behind the CTC management was a close partnership between the central state, the sponsors (industry) and the schools themselves (DES, 1986). In the prospectus, the DES stated the central state would pay directly for running costs, with sponsors paying for building costs and managing the schools (DES, 1986: 6).²⁵⁷ The contracts between the DES and the sponsors would set out the nature of the managerial relationship with a role for “the Secretary of State to monitor the educational performance of the school” (DES, 1986: 8). As proposed in the prospectus, the central state would have a facilitation and regulatory role in the conservative partnership for managing CTCs.

In Baker’s memoir, he talked about the importance of not only the financial involvement of sponsors, but also their continued involvement in control and management of the schools. He argued that CTCs provided another new way of bridging the relationship between industry and education:

I was keen to involve employers and industry in both the funding and the running of a new type of school. The CBI and individual employers were always complaining about the declining standards of school-leavers applying for jobs and coming forward for training. Well here was a chance for them to put up or shut up – not that those who declined to put up did shut up. Continuing employer/industry involvement in this new breed of schools would cement the performance of the link between education and the world of employment. We had to overcome the idea that industry was simply being tapped for money and could then be told, ‘Thank you, now go away.’ The private-sector sponsors of the CTCs would be actively involved on the CTC governing body and the progress of their school. This continuing relationship would be a crucial part of the CTC. In some respects we were recreating the great civic endowments of the last century, where wealthy benefactors had achieved immortality through the generous endowment of great public projects in their home cities. (Baker, 1993: 177–8)

²⁵⁷ “Our initial thinking in the Department had been that CTCs would incur a capital cost of around £2 million to set up. £1 million would be the cost of acquiring existing redundant schools which local authorities had closed or were intending to close because of falling pupil numbers. We were told that as the buildings were going to be retained for educational purposes we would not have to pay the market value for sites or premises...The other £1 million was needed for refurbishment and equipping of the new schools. So when I announced at the outset of the scheme that private sponsors would make ‘a substantial contribution towards the costs’ it was envisaged that the private sector would be contributing at least £1 million per school. Indeed, that was the amount which all of the principal sponsors put up for each CTC.” (Baker, 1993: 182)

This model combined the importance of financial contribution to these schools with the importance of the role of sponsors in the running of the schools. This is particularly interesting when linked back to the rationale for industry's involvement in education; the CTCs were a large outlay that was not intended to have a fiscal return:

As the CTCs will have a charitable character, they will not be profit-making. The resources required, both the capital expenditure and for managing the CTCs, will be substantial. (DES, 1986: 6)

The DES drew on the SAU argument for twinning schools with sponsors as well as the idea that sponsors would benefit by receiving a skilled workforce in the long run whilst being able to exercise some choice in and influence over the direction of the CTCs (see section 6.2.2).

The idea of 'identity' for schools and governing bodies was something Baker expressed in the debates about the 1986 Education Act (see section 6.3.1) and one of the rationales expressed in *Better Schools* for more delegation of funding and management directly to the schools (see section 6.3.2). In the final implementation of CTCs, the individual identities of the various CTCs were very apparent; no two CTCs were the same. This was largely a result of the type of sponsor that ended up supporting the CTC programme, as was discussed in an interview between the author and Baker:

I approached all the big companies and none of them were very keen on this, they said well no it's the job of the government. We don't want to get involved. So then I approached the entrepreneurs...and it's the entrepreneurs who were prepared to put in a million pounds in, not the established large companies of Britain.²⁵⁸

The schools reflected the individualism of these entrepreneurs, each creating a distinctive identity. The schools were then run by individual charitable trusts similar to those proposed in the mid-1980s by interest groups like the SAU and the Hillgate Group (see section 6.2.2).

As stated earlier in the thesis, Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn suggested an oversight model for his technology-plus schools that would also incorporate the

²⁵⁸ Baker Interview – September 2014

business interests (see sections 4.3.2 and 6.3.2). As intended, that trust would, in a partnership between the government and industry, “establish the schools, giving them general curriculum guidelines and providing them with a firm financial footing”.²⁵⁹ This was also one of the priorities of the Number 10 Policy Unit’s ‘10-point plan on education’ for CTCs in “that we should have an intermediate body, which we appointed Cyril Taylor to, to actually oversee that”.²⁶⁰ The creation of the resulting CTC Trust provided this oversight and bridged the relationship between local needs and larger interests, while handling some aspects of funding. In his memoir Baker also described a similar rationale from his perspective for setting up the CTC Trust:

Although we set up a small team at the Department to launch and develop the CTC programme, we still needed someone who was totally committed, professional, and could actually deliver it. We therefore set up the CTC Trust as an external agency supported by DES money, to pursue this initiative. The person I appointed to head the Trust was Cyril Taylor. (Baker, 1993: 185)

The CTC Trust then also became the main body responsible for recruitment of sponsors under the guidance of Taylor. As envisioned in the early stages the trust would have a variety of additional functions that would also support the development of the CTC programme. Baker described these functions in a 1988 House of Commons response that gave the rationale for funding for the CTC Trust:

Grant is being paid to the City Technology College Trust to support work in obtaining premises for CTCs and in briefing prospective sponsors. It is envisaged that the trust will also provide support for individual CTC bodies, for example, in curriculum and staff development.²⁶¹

There are a number of similarities between the national trust suggested by Dunn and the later CTC Trust: establishing schools, providing curriculum support, and handling funding oversight.

7.4 Understanding the Narrative

One of the difficulties of researching the development of ideas is finding clarity in timelines of events or introduction of ideas. Even by triangulating multiple sources there is still somewhat of a ‘black box’ when it comes to policy making. Each of the key figures involved in the making of Conservative education policy in the run-up to

²⁵⁹ The National Archive (TNA) – ED 207/159 – Dunn, Technology- plus schools proposal 1985: 2

²⁶⁰ Griffiths Interview – September 2014

²⁶¹ House of Commons Debates (HC Deb.), 13 June 1988, vol. 135, cols. 6 – 8W

the implementation of the CTC programme has a different view of the timeline. This is partially a result of the information each individual possesses and the perspective they have from within the process. The point at which an idea can be said to enter into the process is nearly impossible to identify, but what is clear is that recorded timelines of the creation of the CTCs show only part of the story. Many different figures influenced the process with a range of agendas, bringing in ideas that had been developed from 1979–1986. Secretary of State Kenneth Baker himself credits the role of various ideas²⁶² that had been discussed previously influencing the direction of his education policy from 1986:

When I took over as Education Secretary it was with the full knowledge of these education ideas which had been under confidential discussion. I have thought it worthwhile to explain what ideas were circulating among colleagues because it is a common misconception both among the public and commentators that Ministers arrive in a Department and immediately begin fashioning their own policies. In fact incoming Ministers are usually faced with the task of implementing what their predecessors have set in motion. But even when there are no major ready-made programmes to pick up, newcomers can draw on a fund of knowledge regarding their new brief from their membership of relevant Cabinet Committees. So it was with my transfer from Environment to Education. Although I have been criticized for making policy on the hoof, and writing the education reforms on the back of a cigarette packet, I had actually for some time been a member of the sub-committee considering education.” (Baker, 1993: 163-4)

It is therefore essential to understand the ideas that were being explored throughout the early 1980s to understand the significance of why the various disparate elements of the CTC programme were included. As has been stated it is difficult to gain clarity about when elements were first introduced into the discussion of the creation of CTCs; what is clear is the type of ideas that were being explored and the various different perspectives that existed on each of these ideas.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed research question 2: what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas in this period? Section 7.1 noted the

²⁶² Baker stated in his memoir that he was a member of the Cabinet’s H committee (on education) discussing education issues and there Joseph had proposed a package of education reform: grant-maintained primary schools set up through charitable trusts or entrepreneur sponsorship, allowing businessmen or parents to take over a county school, expansion of the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), launching a review of teachers’ pay, reforming the distribution of grants to local authorities and schools to base it on performance (cost-effectiveness, value for money and quality), and the introduction of parental credits which provide autonomy to schools through per pupil funding (variation on vouchers). Additionally, Norman Tebbit had introduced a scheme to get contractors to make payments to LEAs to create schools with specific curriculums and Nigel Lawson had recommended removing full LEA responsibility with grants directly coming from central government.

accounts of the key events and key actors before exploring how the agendas of key actors related to their support of certain ideas in the creation of the CTCs. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was particularly supportive of the CTCs having independence from local authorities. She felt that local authorities provided a poor quality service and schools would be better managing their own operations as was proposed in the CTCs. Secretary of State Kenneth Baker had a variety of agenda items including encouraging the integration of information technology into education, improving standards in state education, creating curriculums relevant to working life, encouraging involvement from industry into education, improving opportunities in the inner cities and increasing diversity of options in the state sector in order to empower parents. These were all integral components of the resulting CTC policy. Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn also had a particular interest in creating schools with a specific technology focus that had a clear alignment to the needs of industry. The input of Dunn, and other DES ministers, was noted by Baker as having an important impact on which ideas were integrated into the resulting policy, particularly regarding funding and management aspects.

This chapter primarily focused on research question 3: how were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy? Section 7.2 explored how ideas discussed by actors and interest groups were utilised in the creation of the CTCs. The first area examined was how the CTCs related to earlier ideas about choice and diversity in education. In the 1986 announcement of the policy, Baker drew on discussions about educational standards, and the impact of egalitarian aims, to argue that the CTCs would represent a commitment to improving standards in education. In the prospectus to future sponsors, the DES used arguments about the importance of parental choice to improving standards as part of the justification for the CTCs. Baker also argued that the CTCs would enhance the desire for freedom to choose and would seek to meet the individual needs of pupils. The CTCs, according to Baker and DES publications, also drew on discussions of the importance of empowering parents to take responsibility for their children's education. The CTCs were also arguably designed to address the issues of implementing a voucher scheme by encouraging in-sector diversity, linking funding to pupils and giving schools more autonomy over their own finances. The specialist focus of the CTCs, and the desire to locate them

particularly in the inner cities, showed similarity to elements discussed in the specialist schools proposals from 1981–1985. In discussing the CTCs, both Baker and the DES expressed ideas about the differentiation of education and the acceptance of some degree of selection in admissions which related to earlier discussions of those issues.

The CTCs also fit in with the early discussions in the late 1970s and early 1980s about the aims and purposes of education. Baker argued in his speech launching the policy that education going forward would focus on the right ethos in schools, not just egalitarian aims, drawing on earlier arguments made in the *Black Papers*. The DES also emphasised the importance of the CTCs providing education that would create responsible and law-abiding citizens, reflecting early 1980s DES discussions on citizenship education. In the prospectus, the DES also made clear that the CTCs would not just focus on technology education but would also provide a broad curriculum in keeping with the ideals of a liberal education and ensuring introduction to bodies of knowledge that communicated the common culture. In his 1986 speech, Baker argued that schools should teach respect for authority as well as morals and disciplines that good citizens would need. He also advocated for the restoration of basic skills into education, including through the CTCs, which linked to the discussion about the crisis in skills. In the same speech Baker also drew links to the importance of a trained workforce to economic competitiveness, in keeping with early 1980s discussions. In the prospectus, the DES also emphasised the importance of the role of industry in the operation of the CTCs and the benefits that industry would get from investing in the future workforces, which also drew on earlier 1980s discussions about the links between industry and education. Finally, the prospectus outlined the benefit of the CTCs in providing pupils with practical exposure to working life and giving them transferable skills, which also linked to earlier DES and interest group discussions.

The final area examined in this chapter looked at the relationship of the CTCs to the discussion of ideas about control in education through management and funding. Baker described the CTCs, both in the launch of the programme and in his memoir, as an attempt to give more control to the schools that were best placed to meet local needs. This reflected the discussion about changes in the partnership that managed

education. Baker also argued about the importance of headteachers in shaping the direction of schools, which reflected discussion in the Number 10 Policy Unit and the Hillgate Group in the mid-1980s. The DES also emphasised the importance of governing bodies to the management of the CTCs and as a way of ensuring involvement from the community, reflecting earlier discussions in the DES. The role of parental engagement in the CTCs was also an essential element noted in the prospectus, which linked to earlier DES and interest group discussions. The concern over the education system providing efficiency and value for money raised in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto and by interest groups in the early 1980s was also a concern for the CTCs, as highlighted by Baker in his memoir. The DES prospectus stated that funding for CTCs would be based on a per capita model based on number of pupils attending, which linked to ideas discussed by interest groups about means of ensuring financial accountability and value for money. The prospectus stated that as a result, CTCs would have control over their own funding with the central state contracting directly with the schools, which tied to ideas about school autonomy and the central state as facilitator. The usage of sponsors in the CTCs also provided a means of integrating industry into the running of schools and an alternative means of funding through private contributions, which was discussed in the mid-1980s by the Social Affairs Unit. Finally, Baker discussed how the CTCs would be run by a central trust which would handle oversight of both funding and operations, similar to the national trust suggested by Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn in 1985.

8. Discussion and Contributions

Introduction

This chapter explores how this thesis answered the three research questions set at the beginning, and how it has contributed to the literature. Section 8.1 examines research question 1: how did ideas on education produced outside the Conservative Government relate to those produced within the Government, particularly the Department of Education and Science? This section shows how the findings of this thesis contribute to the established narrative about conservative ideas about education from 1979 to 1986 regarding choice and diversity, aims and purposes of education, and the management and funding of education. The intention is to show how ideas moved between the external and internal discussions in each of these areas. Section 8.2 explores research question 2: what were the roles of key actors and their agendas in the discussion of ideas? This section again shows how the findings contribute to the established narrative about the agendas of different actors and how this relates to the ideas they promoted regarding education in this period. Section 8.3 discusses research question 3: how were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy? This section looks at how the ideas used in the introduction of the CTC policy relate to the larger discussions of these ideas throughout the period. In each section, literature from Chapter 2 provides the basis of the historical narrative in each of these areas. Finally, Section 8.4 outlines the key contributions of this thesis and provides some concluding thoughts.

8.1 Key Findings: Discussion of Ideas

This section relates the findings of this thesis to the existing historical narrative, noting where there is agreement with the established narrative and what detail is added. It also notes where there are new aspects that have not received substantial coverage in the narrative. As with the main body of this thesis, this section looks at choice and diversity, aims and purposes of education, and management and funding. It also shows how the findings of this thesis addressed research question 1 regarding the relation of external to internal ideas.

8.1.1 *Choice and Diversity*

As noted in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.2), historians argue that the *Black Papers* were an important voice in opposition to comprehensivisation in secondary education (Jones, 2003; Simon, 1999). This thesis showed that ideas expressed in the *Black Papers* regarding concern over standards in comprehensive education and the desirability of increasing parental choice seem to be reflected in the ideas expressed in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto (see section 4.2.1). This thesis also showed how the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) advocated for freeing individuals from the comprehensive system which restricted choice, and for restoring individuals' freedom to make choices about education (see section 4.1.2). The CPSESG declared parents had a right to choice that was restricted under the comprehensive system; restoring that choice would empower parents to take responsibility for education. In 1980, Secretary of State Mark Carlisle also argued that individuals must be freed from the constraints of the education system, returning to individuals the right to choice (see section 4.2.2). In the same year, he advocated for returning responsibility to parents in the education system. This makes the case for similar ideas being discussed by external interest groups and internally by politicians contemporaneously. Authors also note that the *Black Paper* authors were concerned that the introduction of comprehensive education restricted responsiveness to differences in pupil needs (Simon, 1999). Stuart Sexton's conversations with the author made clear that a key concern was how to teach high achieving and less academic pupils in the same school (see section 4.1.3). This argument also emerged in the CPSESG publications of the early 1980s as well as in the mid-1980s in the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) and Hillgate Group publications which called for greater differentiation in education, particularly regarding subject aptitudes. This adds to the understanding of differentiation in education in the 1980s by providing depth and detail on how different interest groups advocated that idea. Historians have also noted that Secretary of State Keith Joseph was an advocate of differentiation within the Conservative Government (Knight, 1990; Simon, 1999). This thesis found that his predecessor, Carlisle, also referenced similar ideas about differentiation during his tenure.

One of the first major pieces of legislation of the 1979 Conservative Government was the introduction of the 1980 Education Act, which intended to increase parental

choice and introduced the Assisted Places Scheme (APS). This legislation drew on the idea of the right to choice as well as the individualisation of education. Authors argue that the APS was focused primarily on high achievers and was more a policy of exit for the most able rather than a policy to enhance choice overall (Edwards et al., 1989). As was shown in this thesis, Sexton (the architect of the bill) confirmed, that in his view the APS was intended to provide choice for some, whereas the Parents' Charter (which became the parental choice aspect of the 1980 Act) was intended to extend choice for all (see section 4.2.4). Historians argue that interest groups were an important voice in the discussion of the voucher as a means of facilitating parental choice (Johnson, 1991; Knight, 1990). This thesis adds detail to the existing literature on the role of interest groups, particularly on the CPSESG discussion of the usage of vouchers, and it also establishes a connection between the groups' discussions of vouchers and consumer rights. Vouchers were also advocated by the CPSESG as a means of giving control to the consumers (i.e. parents) and empowering them to demand improvements in quality (see section 4.1.4). Historians note that Joseph was a supporter of the idea of the voucher (Gordon et al., 1991; Halcrow, 1989). This thesis provides detail of Joseph's exploration of the idea of vouchers and the response from within the DES (see section 4.2.5). Finally, this thesis found that there was discussion by CPS members and by DES politicians about the means of extending diversity of provision, particularly through schools with a specialist focus. Whilst some authors have briefly mentioned early 1980s proposals for schools with a specialist subject focus (Knight, 1990; Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993), there has been little in-depth exploration of the different proposals. One of the contributions of this thesis is showing the similarity between the proposals by the CPS (in 1981, 1985 and 1986) and those in the DES (1982 and 1985) (see section 4.3). This thesis showed that similarity in the aims of the schools and the structures of the schools indicates informal influence of the CPS on the DES politicians. Further, records of meetings between the CPSESG members and DES staff also show a formal discussion of the ideas.

8.1.2 *Aims and Purposes*

One of the key areas of discussion amongst interest groups from the late 1970s into the mid-1980s regarded the usage of education for political means. Authors note the concern from *Black Paper* authors about the progressive and egalitarian ethos of

education (Simon, 1999). This thesis found that in the mid-1980s the CPSESG was also particularly concerned about the possibility of political indoctrination in schools and through particular subjects like peace studies (see section 5.2.1). In the same period, similar concerns were raised by the SAU and the Hillgate Group, which may be a result of the interlinking memberships of the organisations (see section 3.2.1). In their publications, these groups were concerned with how the subjects being taught reflected the common culture and shared heritage, which they argued were essential to creating good citizens. The CPSESG and the Hillgate Group also particularly emphasised the values and moral standards of society. They also argued that a broad, liberal education (Bailey, 1984; Watts, 1985) would prepare the pupils to be well-rounded adult citizens. The findings of this thesis add to the existing narrative about interest group concerns about the social aims and purposes of education, particularly regarding the kind of civic education that could ensure transmission of shared values and shape future behaviours (Crick, 2000; Hargreaves, 1994). Further, this thesis found that the speeches of Secretary of State Keith Joseph in the mid-1980s, and those of his successor Kenneth Baker, emphasised this concern about the politicisation of education as well as ideas about the type of citizens education should create (see section 5.3.1). The CPSESG records also indicated meetings between the group and Joseph on the issue, which shows a clear entry point for external ideas on these issues into the internal DES discussion. The idea of a core traditional curriculum that specified clear bodies of knowledge was championed in the speeches of Secretary of State Mark Carlisle. This idea also appeared in Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson's speeches in terms of ensuring pupils had access to the necessary subjects that make up the body of knowledge that constitutes the common culture. Additionally, the DES emphasised the importance of school-based education to ensuring pupils were invested with the morals and values of the common culture. The DES discussions on bodies of knowledge in school-based education seem to precede the discussion in the interest group publications, but the continued dialogue on these issues also adds to the existing knowledge about how conservatives viewed the social purpose of education in this period.

Authors highlight the 1970s crisis in skills and the calls from industry for better trained pupils (Glennister, 2000; Gordon et al., 1991). This thesis showed the language used by employers, and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), to express their concern over the poor basic skills of pupils leaving school (see section 5.2.2). The SAU publications showed that this continued to be an issue for employers through the mid-1980s. CPS members argued from the late 1970s up until 1986 that the training of pupils in England fell below that of other European countries. Many interest groups argued that one possible remedy to both issues was to increase the role of employers in school-based education. The SAU and CPSESG discussed the means of preparing pupils for working life in terms of acquiring both practical and basic skills (Jamieson, 1985). The CPSESG also focused on providing pupils with employment-related knowledge, potentially through specialist schools focused on employment. This adds detail to the existing narrative, which emphasises the focus on technical education with the CPS (Knight, 1990), by comparing the language and ideas referenced by the group in their different publications. In 1979, Mark Carlisle and Minister of State Baroness Young both emphasised concern over the crisis in skills in their party conference speeches (see section 5.3.2). In political speeches and DES publications in the early 1980s, Conservative policymakers used language that echoed the CPS concern about the country's economic competitiveness and technical training. Carlisle and Young also expressed a desire to strengthen the links between employers and education. The attitudes of flexibility, self-reliance and adaptability (Cohen, 1984) were also advocated by Carlisle and Young in the early 1980s; the SAU also returned to these themes of transferable skills in the mid-1980s. This thesis showed that through his tenure, Joseph repeatedly advocated for the introduction of more technical skills and education into the state system, which adds to the literature on Joseph's interest in this area (Knight, 1990; Lawton, 1994). He also conducted a consultation in 1985, following the publication of the *Better Schools* White Paper, which asked various organisations, including the CBI, to determine how work preparedness could be better integrated into the curriculum. The findings of this thesis show a 'formal influence' of the CBI, and industry, on how ideas about the economic aims of education were discussed in this period (Stone, 2004).

8.1.3 *Management and Funding*

In terms of management, interest groups and politicians were concerned about the traditional partnership that managed education. In the late 1970s, the *Black Papers* expressed concern about uniformity through the introduction of comprehensivisation (see section 6.2.1). The imposition of comprehensive education on local authorities was a key issue in 1979 speeches by both Mark Carlisle and Rhodes Boyson (himself a *Black Paper* author) (see section 6.3.1). They argued for returning to local authorities control over how they organised schools in their areas. It must be noted that initial motivation for the introduction of comprehensive education came from the local authorities. The SAU publications in the early 1980s, and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) *Omega File: Education Policy* in the mid-1980s, argued for returning more direct management to the schools. They argued this would ensure more responsiveness and accountability to those users of education. Similarly, in the discussion of the 1986 Education Act, Secretary of State Kenneth Baker and Minister of State Chris Patten also wanted to decentralise more control to the schools to encourage school autonomy and ‘responsive accountability’ (Becher et al., 1981). These findings add to historians’ accounts of the consumerism movement of the 1970s leading to greater desire for accountability (Morris, 1986). The final area of concern for interest groups in the mid-1980s, primarily the SAU and the Hillgate Group, was the restriction of ‘professional accountability’ (Becher et al., 1981). These groups argued that local authorities interfered with the answerable relationship between staff and headteachers. Other authors argue that the Ruskin College speech (see section 2.4.2) was a criticism of professional accountability (Ranson, 2003). The discussion of ideas in this thesis showed that there was a desire in the 1980s to improve the operation of professional accountability in the management of education.

Interest groups and politicians argued for the creation of a new conservative partnership to manage education between the headteachers, governing bodies, parents and the larger communities including industry. This thesis finds that giving more control to headteachers was a particularly important idea expressed by both the Hillgate Group (see section 6.2.1) and Kenneth Baker in 1986 (see section 6.3.1). Authors also note the increase in the responsibility given to headteachers and school governors in the 1980s (Maclure, 1992). This thesis found that this was a particular

area of concern for the SAU, Baker and the Number 10 Policy Unit in the mid-1980s. The SAU noted that governing bodies provided a means of incorporating more interests into the management of schools such as parents and the larger community. Historians argue that this new form of partnership was modelled on the findings of the Taylor Report in the 1970s (Gordon et al., 1991; Sharp, 2002). The inclusion of these interests and an advisory role for local authorities on governing bodies, as argued by the ASI and in the *Better Schools* White Paper, does resemble the partnership described in the Taylor Report (see section 2.4.2). Interest group and DES publications argued that increasing the powers of governing bodies would provide a means of increasing ‘consumer accountability’ (Ranson, 2003) for parents and the larger community. The ASI argued that the inclusion of these interests would require the education system to respond to consumer pressure, which builds on existing research about the groups focus on consumer accountability in this period (Ranson, 1988). This thesis explored that thread of discussion in the ASI *Omega File: Education Policy*, and found a similar line of argument in SAU publications in this period. The SAU also noted in 1984 that governing bodies provide a means of involving industry in the management of education, which was also an important aspect for Baker in debates about the 1986 Bill. This thesis did not find direct evidence of formal influence of the SAU or ASI on internal government discussions in the form of meetings or politicians referencing their publications, however there was a clear similarity in the ideas expressed by these groups and politicians in this period.

Interest groups and politicians also noted that the existing partnerships failed to provide efficiency in spending or value for money. Historians argue that the consumerist movement mentioned earlier in this section also resulted in increased demands for value for money as well as accountability (Gordon et al., 1991) and the efficient usage of resources (Simon, 1999). This thesis found that these arguments emerged in the publications of the SAU and CPSESG in the early 1980s (see section 6.2.2). This was also an area of concern for the Conservative Government, as it was an issue of particular weight in the 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto and mentioned in Carlisle, Boyson and Joseph’s speeches throughout the early 1980s (see section 6.3.2). One means of achieving better efficiency and value for money, discussed by interest groups and politicians, was to fund schools directly with the

central state acting as facilitator of funding. In the early 1980s the SAU argued for the usage of educational allowances to give schools more autonomy over funding. This was also a key discussion in mid-1980s DES publications and in the 1986 Education Act. Baker noted that per capita funding was a possible means of providing schools autonomy of funding, similar to educational allowances, in that the money was based on pupil numbers. Both interest groups, particularly the Hillgate Group, and politicians called for the central state to facilitate this funding. This reflects the existing historical narrative of centralisation and decentralisation of responsibilities (Kogan et al., 1984; Ranson & Tomlinson, 1986; Sharp, 2002) creating a ‘fragmented centralisation’ where both occurred (Ball, 2008). This thesis adds to that narrative by showing that the management of funding was both decentralised to the schools themselves and centralised to the central state in terms of direct allocation and oversight (as local authorities were removed from funding management). Finally, the SAU encouraged the usage of private funding as another means of ensuring efficiency by increasing the involvement of outside interests, like industry. The SAU and Hillgate Group argued that schools could be run by individual trusts or charities, which would help facilitate the introduction of private funding and encourage the involvement of industry in education. This thesis contributes to the existing narrative on the role of the SAU in advocating for more private funding. It emphasises the role of the SAU in promoting ideas about the integration of business into industry that have been overlooked in the narrative.

8.2 Key Findings: Role of Agendas and Actors

This section notes how this thesis has added to knowledge in the area of research question 2: what were the role of the key actors and agendas in the discussion of policy ideas? This section looks first at the role of specific actors in the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) whose agendas led to the promotion of certain ideas in the external discussion. This section goes on to look at the role of the agendas of internal actors in the promotion of ideas about choice and diversity, technology education, and reducing the role of local authorities.

8.2.1 External Actors

This sub-section looks at the agendas of different actors in external interest groups from 1979 through 1986. Throughout this thesis the ideas expressed by Caroline

Cox and John Marks appear in publications for a number of interest groups. Cox and Marks contributed to the *Black Paper* publications in the 1970s arguing against the politicisation of education. For the Social Affairs Unit (SAU) they were members and contributors arguing for direct control over funding by schools through education allowances in 1981 (see section 6.2.2).

From 1981–1985, Cox and Marks had a more formal influence over DES policy through their roles as chairman and secretary, respectively, of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group (CPSESG) (see section 3.2.1). For this group they edited the major publication *The Right to Learn* and they attended numerous meetings throughout the period with Secretary of State Keith Joseph and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Cox and Marks notably argued against the politicisation of education and the introduction of peace studies as a subject in schools (see section 4.1.1). They also advocated the introduction of specialist comprehensive schools that had a particular subject specialism, which was an idea circulated to the DES and discussed in meetings with key politicians (see section 4.3). Researchers mention Cox as a possible influence on the direction of the CTCs given her advocacy of specialist schools (Walford & Miller, 1991). The findings of this thesis indicate that there were many similarities between Cox and Marks' proposals and the resulting CTCs; these findings, which add to the existing knowledge in this area (see section 7.2.1), include the idea that CTCs would be centres of excellence, catering to pupils of different abilities.

Cox and Marks also contributed to the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) *Omega File: Education Policy* which advocated for creating a system that was more responsive to consumers and provided greater accountability. Finally, they contributed to the creation of the Hillgate Group manifesto in 1986 which cut across many of the themes discussed in this thesis. This thesis found that Cox and Marks played a key role in helping to develop many of the ideas in the external discussion in this period including ideas about funding autonomy for schools, enhancing parental choice, reducing the politicisation of education, creating specialist schools and increasing consumer accountability.

There were a number of other actors associated with the CPS who played key roles in promoting certain ideas in the larger discussions. In the early 1980s there were two authors who advocated for the usage of the voucher. Marjorie Seldon was a CPSESG member as well as founder of the pressure group Friends of the Education Voucher Experiment in Representative Regions (FEVER). Seldon wrote about the value of the voucher in CPSESG publications and was mentioned in internal government memos as a person to contact to give more information on the possible barriers to implementing a system-wide scheme (see section 4.2.5). Antony Flew was another CPSESG member who advocated for the voucher in a number of CPSESG publications. Like Cox and Marks, he also contributed to a number of the organisations in this period including the *Black Papers*, the SAU, and ASI. Both Seldon and Flew argued that vouchers would give weight to parents' choices and empower them as consumers.

In the mid-1980s, there were two CPS authors who actively promoted the creation of more technical schools. Fred Naylor, who was also a *Black Paper* contributor, wrote an important publication that compared technical schools in England to those in other European countries (see section 4.3.1 and 5.2.2). He argued that the creation of new technical schools would expose pupils to some manual work as well as the skills they would need for later employment. Authors note that Naylor's work may have been an influence on the turn to technical education in the mid-1980s that resulted in the CTCs (Whitty et al., 1993). Similarly, authors also note the advocacy of technical schools by Cyril Taylor, a director of the CPS, as another possible influence on the CTCs (Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). Taylor organised a conference on employment in 1986 and one of the recommendations in the conference report was the creation of a number of new technical schools. Taylor was motivated by economic drivers to find ways of decreasing youth unemployment and to tailor the outputs of education to better meet the needs of industry. This thesis shows how the agendas of these four actors regarding these two issues, vouchers and technical education, resulted in their promotion into the external discussion of ideas. This thesis adds to the existing knowledge on the agendas of these actors by exploring the detail of their arguments and how they linked to the larger discussions of ideas.

8.2.2 *Internal Actors*

The discussion of the agendas of internal actors is explored thematically to correspond with the main structure of the thesis. Looking first at choice and diversity, there were three major alternatives discussed in this period that correspond to the agendas of key actors: the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), vouchers and specialist schools. The APS was motivated by the work of political adviser Stuart Sexton and the interest of Secretary of State Mark Carlisle. Carlisle was interested in it providing ‘ladders of opportunity’ for the most gifted, reflecting his support of differentiation in education (see section 4.2.3). Carlisle felt that the APS reflected an emphasis on increasing freedom and choice that were restricted under comprehensivisation (see section 4.2.4). Sexton had been brought in to work on this policy while the party was in opposition. His agenda came from an interest in replicating what worked in the independent sector as well as introducing more choice in the state sector from his time as a *Black Paper* author. He saw the APS, like vouchers, as a mechanism for facilitating choice and introducing the market into education. Authors argue that Carlisle represented a more traditional conservatism that did not embrace the same market-oriented values as Sexton (Blake, 1985; Knight, 1990; Lawton, 1994). The findings of this thesis add detail to the existing knowledge about how the different actors’ agendas conflicted and impacted what ideas were promoted at which times.

Authors argue that Keith Joseph, who replaced Carlisle as secretary of state, had an agenda more aligned with Sexton on the issue of vouchers (Gordon et al., 1991; Halcrow, 1989; Harrison, 1994). The detailed analysis of Joseph’s speeches conducted in this thesis confirms this narrative, showing his advocacy of the voucher and other market principles (see section 4.2.4). He felt that the voucher would increase schools’ responsiveness to parents and improve standards. Joseph was interested in opening up choice in the state education sector to all parents. Under-Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson, also a former *Black Paper* author, was also a key advocate of extending parental choice in an effort to improve standards. Researchers argue that one important aspect of Boyson’s agenda was his criticism of the comprehensive schools and desire to preserve the grammar schools (Lawton, 1994). The findings of this thesis also contribute to the narrative about Boyson’s agenda by examining his proposal for specialist schools (see section 4.3.1). Boyson

wanted to introduce policies that would increase diversity in the state sector to improve opportunities for the most able students, like Carlisle. Boyson's specialist comprehensive schools had a narrower curricular focus than a normal comprehensive. He argued his proposed schools were based on grammar schools which provided a specific focus for the most academic pupils. Boyson also favoured some form of selection of pupils. Researchers note the possible influence of Boyson on the discussion of the CTCs owing to his work on specialist schools (Whitty et al, 1993). Through close examination of Boyson's specialist schools proposal, this thesis found extensive similarity between many of the ideas and those that emerged in the resulting CTC proposal (see section 7.2.1).

Turning to technology education, there were two key internal actors who advocated heavily for this on their agendas. Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn proposed the creation of technology-plus schools with the intention of focus on technology education in schools (see section 4.3.2 and 5.4.1). He was interested in increasing the economic awareness of pupils and providing school-based education that better addressed the needs of industry. He also wanted to ensure that the schools balanced breadth, by providing a broad general curriculum, and depth, by providing specialist content. Authors argue that Dunn was a key actor responsible for the development of the CTC programme and note that this proposal may have been an influence on the development of the policy (Simon, 1999; Walford, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). By looking into the detail of Dunn's proposal and the resulting internal DES discussion of the proposal (see section 4.3.3), this thesis expands on the existing knowledge about Dunn's interest in technology education. Dunn argued that these schools could prepare the way for other technology programmes like the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). The archival evidence used in this thesis indicates that the expansion of technology education in general was a particular agenda item for Dunn that influenced the ideas he promoted in the internal discussion.

The existing research also highlights Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's active relationship with industry and his interest in technology education (Lawrence, 1992; Whitty et al., 1993). Through interviews conducted with Baker, this thesis adds to the existing knowledge about how he developed an interest in technology education, specifically information technology (see section 5.4.2). Information technology

became a key agenda item for Baker during his time as Minister of Information Technology. He believed that IT was an effective way of increasing pupil engagement with education. Baker also saw computers as the gateway to introducing technology into education more broadly. He felt that the general concern about the changing world of work provided the right focus to advocate for a policy based on introducing IT into education. As Secretary of State, Baker had a variety of agenda items including encouraging the integration of IT into education, improving standards in state education, creating curriculums relevant to working life, encouraging involvement from industry in education, improving opportunities in the inner cities and increasing diversity of options in the state sector in order to empower parents. These were all integral components of the resulting CTC policy.

Finally, there was a particular interest in reducing the influence of local authorities that was advocated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the head of the Number 10 Policy Unit, Brian Griffiths. Authors argue that one of the major agenda items for Thatcher in the early 1970s during her time as Secretary of State for Education was the removal of local authority control (Young, 1990). As was noted in Chapter 7 (see section 7.1.3), the removal of CTCs from local authority control was one of the key elements that drew Thatcher to the CTCs. She felt that this was an important change, as local authorities did not provide sufficient accountability in terms of quality. She also believed that reducing local authority control would increase transparency in the management of schools. Thatcher was a strong advocate of free market principles, and giving more control to the schools themselves would allow the system to be more responsive to the consumers as would be true in a market. The ‘10-point plan for education’, drafted by Griffiths along with Thatcher, advocated for more devolution of power to schools to achieve this purpose (see section 6.2.2). The 10-point plan also included removal of local authority powers to control education with a different intermediary body to regulate oversight (see section 7.2.3). Researchers state that Griffiths may have also been an influence on the creation of the CTC policy (Chitty, 1989a; Whitty et al., 1993). Interviews with Griffiths indicate that he and Thatcher had clear ideas on their agenda regarding the management of local authorities that were an influence on their support of the CTCs.

8.3 Key Findings: Ideas in Relation to CTCs

This section explores how this thesis addressed research question 3: how were ideas about choice, the aims of education and the control of schools utilised by actors with regard to the CTC policy? It examines how the findings relate to the existing research in this area. It looks at how the ideas discussed in the rest of the thesis were utilised in the introduction of the CTC policy.

8.3.1 Choice and Diversity

Researchers argue that the CTCs, like the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), were intended to increase competition in education in order to improve standards in schools (Abbott, 1993; Walford & Miller, 1991; Walford, 1991). Looking at Secretary of State Kenneth Baker's announcement of the policy, improving educational standards was a clear aim and his focus on the CTCs serving as beacons of excellence in the state sector linked to aims of increasing competition (see section 7.2.1). The importance of parental choice as a driver for improved standards was also noted in the CTC publications, which again links to the idea of competition discussed early in the 1980s (see sections 4.1.1 and 4.2.1). The CTCs were also a means of facilitating freedom of choice and allowing parents to take more responsibility for their children's education, which also reflected earlier discussions in the 1980s (see sections 4.1.2 and 4.2.2). The CTCs required parents to show their commitment to education as a condition of pupil entry, thereby reinforcing this idea of parental responsibility. As with early 1980s Conservative policies aimed at improving parental choice, such as the Parents' Charter and the APS, the CTCs empowered parents to take ownership of decision-making in education (see section 4.2.4). This supports the work by other researchers that argues that in some ways the APS paved the way for the CTCs by turning policy discussions to the issue of parental choice (Dale, 1989b; Edwards et al., 1992; Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993).

Researchers also argue that the introduction of the APS and CTCs marked a shift towards seeing parents as consumers with the state responding to demand (Dale, 1989b; Whitty et al., 1993). The findings of this thesis also show that Baker's speeches focused on the idea of parents as users and consumers which connected to similar discussions in external interest group publications throughout the 1980s (see

section 4.1.2). The CTCs were also arguably designed to facilitate consumer demand by linking funding to pupils and giving schools more autonomy over their own finances, reflecting a similar discussion by external interest groups (see section 4.1.4). The findings of this thesis lend detail and support to the argument in the literature that the CTCs were part of an ideological project to introduce elements of the market into education – such as supply and demand (Gewirtz et al., 1992; Walford, 2000, 2014; Whitty et al., 1993). The CTCs can also be seen as a means of providing individualisation in education and creating in-sector diversity similar to the specialist schools proposals from interest groups and politicians (see section 4.3). The CTCs were aimed at providing options for individuals who were interested in the ethos and unique content offered by the schools (see section 4.1.3 and 4.2.3). The schools were intended to serve an unmet need in individuals with a technology interest, particularly those who lived in inner cities. The specialist focus of the CTCs, and the desire to locate them particularly in the inner cities, showed similarity to elements discussed in the specialist schools proposals from 1981–1985.

8.3.2 *Aims and Purposes*

The CTCs also reflected discussions in the late 1970s and early 1980s about the aims and purposes of education. The content of the CTCs, as envisaged, was to provide pupils with the necessary knowledge, values and morals to be good citizens. Authors argue that the CTCs reflected a return to traditional values in schools (Birley, 1995) as well as a concern that the system as it stood promoted the wrong values (Whitty et al., 1993). This thesis found evidence of both aspects in the language used by Secretary of State Kenneth Baker regarding his vision of Conservative education that the CTCs represented. He wanted education to focus on the right ethos, not an egalitarian or progressive ethos, with the CTCs providing education that would create responsible and law-abiding citizens (see section 7.2.2). This reflected similar concerns expressed in early 1980s discussions about the progressive ethos of education or the politicisation of education and the impact that would have on the creation of good citizens (see section 5.2.1 and 5.3.1). This thesis adds to the knowledge about how the CTCs reflected the social aims of education. The existing literature has focused on how, given the technology focus, the CTCs relate to larger economic aims for education. The DES also made clear that the CTCs would not just focus on technology education but also would provide a broad

curriculum which linked to discussions about the ideals of a liberal education and ensuring introduction to bodies of knowledge that communicated the common culture (see section 5.2.1 and 5.3.1).

One of the key focuses of the CTCs was to ensure pupils received a good grounding in basic skills, which Baker called the three Rs, while at the same time exposing them to more technical or practical aspects of education. Baker's advocacy of the restoration of basic skills into education linked to the larger discussion starting in the late 1970s about the crisis in skills (see section 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). Authors argue that the CTCs were an attempt to address concerns about economic competitiveness through the focus on skills (Edward et al, 1992). This was seen in Baker's announcement of the programme when he drew links to the importance of a trained workforce to economic competitiveness, in keeping with early 1980s discussions (see section 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). CTCs were also discussed as a means of addressing the needs of industry by giving them an active role in the schools. Some researchers note that in this sense the CTCs were building and expanding off the ideas of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (Edwards et al., 1992; Walford & Miller, 1991; Whitty et al., 1993). This thesis supports this analysis by showing that the DES specifically references the CTCs building off the groundwork of the TVEI in this area (see section 7.2.2). The importance of the role of industry in the operation of the CTCs and the benefits that industry would get from investing in future workers also drew on earlier 1980s discussions about the links between industry and education (see section 5.2.2). This analysis also fits with the existing literature, which states that this aspect of the CTCs reflected a larger Conservative vision about shaping education to meet the needs of industry (Gewirtz et al., 1992; Whitty et al., 1993).

8.3.3 Management and Funding

The CTCs were an attempt to create a conservative partnership in education which included the central government, the schools, parents and industry (see section 6.1). Concerns about autonomy and accountability were addressed by envisioning strong headteachers and governing bodies running the schools (see sections 6.2.1 and 6.3.1). Authors argue that it was the independence of the CTCs from local authorities that was one of their main appeals to politicians (Edwards & Whitty,

1992; Walford & Miller, 1991). The findings of this thesis also support this narrative by looking at the rationale for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's interest in the policy (see section 8.2.2). The DES also emphasised the importance of governing bodies to the management of the CTCs and as a way of integrating community involvement, which was also a key area of discussion in the early 1980s (see sections 6.2.1 and 6.3.1). Parents were seen to be active participants as can be seen in the CTC prospectus, and the desire to have them on the governing bodies also reflected these earlier discussions. Finally, the importance of industry engaging with the management of the schools was also noted by other authors (McLeod, 1988) and can be clearly seen as an important theme expressed in the findings of this thesis.

The CTCs also sought to address the issues of value for money and efficiency, by giving schools more control over their own funding and requiring the schools to compete for pupils in order to receive grants. This clearly linked to discussions in interest group publications and DES discussions in the early 1980s (see sections 6.2.2 and 6.3.2). The central state was the facilitator through contractual relationships with the CTCs and through direct grants. The CTC policy also incorporated some of the ideas expressed in interest group proposals for private funding to increase oversight and inclusion of interests by bringing in sponsors (see section 6.2.2). The evidence of this thesis also fits with the existing narrative about one of the key aims of the CTCs being to increase industry involvement through funding schemes (Walford, 2000). As envisioned, in the funding agreements between sponsors and the central government, the sponsors would be involved in making decisions about the direction of the content of education. In the creation of the CTC policy, the policy's authors seem to take on board concerns about accountability by proposing individual trusts to manage the school finances and a national trust to provide oversight and support to the schools. The existing literature suggests that authors of the policy may have been aware of earlier proposals for similar trusts (Edwards & Whitty, 1992) and this thesis points towards Under-Secretary of State Bob Dunn's proposal as possible evidence of this (see section 6.3.2).

8.4 Contributions and Concluding Thoughts

This section concludes both the chapter and the thesis by looking at contributions of this thesis to the discussions about conservative ideas about education in the 1980s. One contribution of this thesis is to add to the historical narrative about the 1980s discussion of different conservative education policy ideas concerning choice and diversity, the aims and purposes of education, and funding and management. The findings of this thesis show how the ideas expressed by interest groups external to government relate to those expressed internally to government and the Department of Education and Science. This thesis showed where there was similarity in terms of language and argument. This thesis highlighted where similar policy proposals were introduced externally and then internally, such as the specialist schools proposals. This thesis also noted where there were formal connections between the external interest groups and the internal policymakers such as: the role of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group and their frequent meetings with Keith Joseph, the several *Black Paper* authors who were also policymakers in the early 1980s like Rhode Boyson and Stuart Sexton, and finally the direct consultation with the Confederation of British Industry on integrating more work preparedness aspects into the school curriculums. Finally, there was substantial overlap between the authorship of external publications and the membership of the different interest groups which further added to the transference of ideas from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s.

One aspect that emerges most clearly from this research is that the ideas that underlay the CTC policy did not enter discussion for the first time upon Kenneth Baker's arrival at the Department of Education and Science. Authors have acknowledged the variety of potential influences on the creation of this policy and on the Conservative vision for education throughout the 1980s (see section 2.5.3). This work shows that Baker, as stated in both his memoir and in an interview with the author, was aware of many of the aspects of policy that were thought out at the DES, and in the government in general prior to taking over as Secretary of State (see section 7.4). Baker acknowledged that he drew on many of these government sources in developing the policy, particularly the Cabinet committee on education, where Keith Joseph had proposed the idea of sponsorship of primary schools by businesses that would rely on charitable trusts. This thesis showed in detail how the

different ideas utilised by Baker and the DES to introduce the CTCs related to the discussions in each of these areas, both amongst external interest groups and within the Conservative Governments of the early 1980s (see section 7.2).

Additionally, the examination in this thesis of the different specialist schools proposals introduced throughout the 1980s also supports the idea that the CTCs related to early discussion of policy ideas. Some authors acknowledged the proposals that were introduced in 1985 and 1986 from Bob Dunn, Fred Naylor and Cyril Taylor, but there is much more limited discussion of the proposals from Rhodes Boyson and Caroline Cox and John Marks in 1981 and 1982. The mid-1980s proposals have been noted for their focus on technology education and were perhaps a catalyst for call to action on this issue from government, but the extent of similarity in structure, management and funding between Dunn's proposal and the CTCs has not been explored in detail by researchers. It should also be noted that the clear re-emergence of interest in the proposals at the end of Joseph's tenure in 1985 also indicates a growing consensus, at least among interest groups, on the benefits of specialist schools, which is also not discussed in detail in the existing literature.

One of the aspects emphasised in the existing literature is the importance of Baker's arrival at the DES as a catalyst for the introduction of this policy. While many of the aspects may have been under consideration or discussion in the department, the role of the activist policymaker cannot be discounted. Baker had the relevant agenda and political capital to drive the policy through. Baker's particular agenda, as described earlier in this thesis (see section 3.2, 5.4 and 8.2.2), was also focused on information technology. Based on the analysis in this thesis, there is little evidence that the focus on information technology came from any source other than Baker.

This study sought to examine the creation of the CTC programme and understand the relationship of the policy to conservative thought in the early 1980s. It relied on historical analysis to look at the development of ideas about education policy in three key areas: choice and diversity in the education sector, aims and purposes of education, and control of education through management and funding. This study also explored the relationship between ideas in discussion amongst interest groups in this period and internal government discussions about education policy. It sought to

understand both the formal and informal relationships that existed between interest groups and government. This study also re-examined the historical narrative with a new focus and new evidence. As with all historical work, more information may become available in the future which provides new insights into this period and the actors involved which will require further study.

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Appendix

Individuals Contacted for Interview

Name	Title	Outcome
Kenneth Baker	Secretary of State for Education	Interviewed - September 2014
Brian Griffiths	Head of Number 10 Policy Unit	Interviewed - September 2014
Stuart Sexton	Policy Adviser	Interviewed - September 2014
Tony Kerpel	Policy Adviser	No Response to Letter
Nicholas Stuart	Civil Servant	No Response to Letter
Rob Smith	Civil Servant - Principle Private Secretary	No Response to Letter
Tom Jeffrey	Civil Servant - Private Secretary	No Response to Letter
Walter Ulrich	Civil Servant - Deputy Permanent Secretary	No Response to Letter
Caroline Cox	Chair of Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group	Correspondence as could not arrange interview
Cyril Taylor	Head of CTC Trust	Interviewed - June 2013

Interview questions were not necessarily asked or asked as stated here, but they provided a structure to my approach to the interviews to ensure coverage of topics.

Interview Questions – Cyril Taylor

1. What was it about a return to technical education that particularly interested you?
 - a. Why were you involved in technical schools? And why that moment?
 - b. Was there something in particular that drove your interest in it from your time as a London councillor?
 - c. Building on that, there were existing training programmes like TVEI (and the Youth Training scheme), what did you feel technical schools (later CTCs) would further contribute?
2. You have spoken previously about the benefits of the German system of technical education, what was it about that model that you think made it effective?
 - a. How did you come to know the German system?
 - b. What did you think that policymakers in the UK could learn from it to improve technical education here?

3. You have also mentioned the technical education tradition of the tri-partite era, why do you think the technical side was not sufficiently developed?
 - a. In terms of the CTCs, what were the ways you were trying to get around those development issues?
 - b. Why this solution? Why go back to the technical schools?
4. The CTC policy was focused on the inner city, why in your view was that particularly important?
 - a. Further, who was the policy intended to serve? Were there particularly types of children or families?
5. Would you be able to tell me more about your association with the Centre for Policy Studies?
 - a. How would you characterize the relationship between the CPS and the Department of Education and Science at the time?
6. Who did you feel was most directly involved in the construction and promotion of the policy?
 - a. Who do you think I should speak to in particular?
7. Would you tell me a bit about your early days with the CTC Trust?
 - a. When you began to recruit sponsors, can you talk more about why they eventually agreed? What was it that brought them on board?
8. What was your working relationship like with Kenneth Baker? How involved was he in the development of the policy?
 - a. Was he involved in working with the local authorities to get sites or with obtaining sponsors?
 - b. How involved was he in the policy and from when?
 - c. What was the reaction among the DES civil service to the policy?
9. Were there any individuals or groups who opposed this project?
 - a. Could you talk a bit about that, from whom and in what form?

Interview Questions – Kenneth Baker

Not all interview questions were asked or asked as stated here, but they provided a structure to ensure coverage of topics.

1. What drew you to the idea of secondary schools with a specific emphasis on technology?
 - a. Was there something in particular that made you decide that it was the right moment to introduce more technology education?
2. In the early 1980s there were a number of early variations on schools with a specific curricular focus. Were there any that were a particular influence on your conception of the CTCs? Were there any particular individuals?
3. Many people have talked about the importance of the employment conference that happened in March of 1986 as well as the CPS pamphlets on technical schools. Did they influence your thinking at all?

- a. How would you characterise the relationship between the CPS and the Department of Education and Science at the time?
 - b. What other (if any) interest groups and education specialist were brought in externally to advise on the policy? - CBI, IOD, etc.
4. Going further into these ideas about origins and influences. Were there any ideas or policies from the prior secretaries of state which you built off in shaping the CTCs?
 - a. Were any of the discussions about vouchers influences on your thinking about funding mechanisms and choice?
5. Were there any models of private and public sector collaboration in education, in terms of both sponsorship funding and participation in governance, which you were drawing on for the CTC policy?
 - a. Were there any examples in other policy areas that you were using as a model?
6. Was the idea a particular area of interest for the PM?
 - a. What was it that interested her about the policy or why don't you think it was a particular interest?
 - b. Were there any other members of the cabinet or the policy team who had a particular interest in the policy?
 - c. What was it that interested him/her about the policy or why don't you think it was a particular interest?
7. What was the reaction among the DES civil service to the policy?
 - a. What was your working relationship like with the civil service?
8. You have mentioned in the past that one of the key aims of the CTC policy was to improve student work readiness. How did you envision this working in CTCs and what did you think of the existing programmes in schools?
9. At the time there were existing training programmes like TVEI (and the Youth Training Scheme) to help improve work readiness; in your book you say that the TVEI was limited – what did you think the limits were?
 - a. What did you feel CTCs would further contribute?
10. You have also mentioned the technical education tradition of the tri-partite era, why do you think the technical side was not sufficiently developed?
 - a. In terms of the CTCs, what were the ways you were trying to get around those development issues?
11. The CTC policy as originally intended was focused on the inner city, why in your view was that particularly important?
 - a. Was the concept of magnet schools in anyway an influence on your thinking about the CTCs?
 - b. Further, who was the policy intended to serve? Were there particularly types of children or families?
12. Why in your view was it important to increase choice and diversity in the state sector?
 - a. How did you feel the CTCs enhanced government policies on choice that already existed?
13. Why did you feel that having self-governance and direct control over funding was important to the effectiveness of the CTCs?
 - a. Why did you feel that more control should be given directly to the schools themselves (in funding)?

14. Expanding on governance question, why involve a variety of interest (parents, community interests and employers) in secondary school governing boards, particularly CTCs?
 - a. How did you originally envision the working relationship between headteachers and the governing boards in CTCs?
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Interview Questions – Brian Griffiths

- 1) How much were you involved in the formulation of education policy in this period?
 - a. And specifically, how were you involved in the formulation of the City Technology Colleges?
 - b. What about in the implementation?
 - c. What was the working relationship like between the No 10 Policy Unit and the DES?
- 2) Education policy was brought forward on to the agenda for the 1987 general election. Was the CTC programme a particular area of interest for the PM?
 - a. What was it that interested her about the policy or why don't you think it was a particular interest?
 - b. How did it fit in with the larger vision for direction of education policy?
- 3) Were there any other members of the cabinet or the policy team who had a particular interest in the policy?
 - a. What was it that interested him/her about the policy or why don't you think it was a particular interest?
- 4) Why did you feel that having self-governance and direct control over funding was important to the effectiveness of the CTCs?
 - a. Why did you feel that more control should be given directly to the schools themselves (in terms of funding) as opposed to utilising the local authorities?
- 5) In the early 1980s there were a number of early variations on schools with a specific curricular focus. Were there any that were a particular influence on the structure or focus of the CTCs?
- 6) Were there any particular educationalists or theorists whose thinking was an influence?
- 7) How would you characterise involvement of the CPS in policy formulation during this period, particularly in terms of education?
 - a. What about in terms of direct involvement with the Department of Education and Science?
- 8) Many people have talked about the importance of the employment conference (set up by Cyril Taylor and the CPS) that happened in March of 1986 as well as the CPS pamphlets on technical schools. How much did that influence your thinking or the PM's thinking about the direct of education?
 - a. What other (if any) interest groups and education specialist were brought in externally to advise on the policy? - CBI, IOD, etc.
- 9) Why secondary schools with a specific emphasis on technology?

- a. Was there something in particular that made this the right moment to introduce more technology education?
- 10) One of the key aims of the CTC policy was to improve student work readiness. How did they envision this working in CTCs and what did you think of the existing programmes in schools?
- 11) At the time there were existing training programmes like TVEI (and the Youth Training Scheme) to help improve work readiness - What did you feel CTCs would further contribute?
- 12) You have also mentioned the technical education tradition of the tri-partite era, why do you think the technical side was not sufficiently developed?
- 13) The CTC policy as originally intended was focused on the inner city, why in your view was that particularly important?
 - a. Was the concept of magnet schools in anyway an influence on your thinking about the CTCs?
 - b. Further, who was the policy intended to serve? Were there particularly types of children or families?
- 14) Why in your view was it important to increase choice and diversity in the state sector?
 - a. How did you feel the CTCs enhanced government policies on choice that already existed?

Interview Questions – Stuart Sexton

- 1) How were you involved in the formulation of education policy in this period?
 - a. What were the key issue you worked on? (APS, etc.)
 - b. Why were you interested in these issues?
- 2) In the early 1980s there were a number of early variations on schools with a specific curricular focus. Could you tell me more about these proposals and were you involved in the development of any of them?
- 3) Were there any particular educationalists or theorists whose thinking was an influence on your thinking about education policy in this period?
- 4) How would you characterise involvement of the CPS in policy formulation during this period, particularly in terms of education?
 - a. What about in terms of direct involvement with the Department of Education and Science?
 - b. What other (if any) interest groups and education specialist were brought in externally to advise on policy? - CBI, IOD, etc.
- 5) What were the key policy issues for the secretaries of state you worked with?
- 6) Did any of the discussions about vouchers seem to influence thinking about funding mechanisms and choice in this period?

- 7) Was there something in particular that made this the right moment to introduce more technology education?
 - a. You have also mentioned the technical education tradition of the tri-partite era, why do you think the technical side was not sufficiently developed?
- 8) Why in your view was it important to increase choice and diversity in the state sector?