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'Performance' Measures as Neoliberal Industrialisation of Higher Education: A Policy Archaeology of the Teaching Excellence Framework and Implication for the Marginalisation of Music Education

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‘Performance’ measures as neoliberal industrialisation of higher education: A policy archaeology of the Teaching Excellence Framework and implications for the marginalisation of music education.

Abstract

Instrumental measures pledging to assess the ‘quality’ of education represent the latest turn in the unabating neoliberalisation of the UK education sector. As the proliferation of league tables, accountancy measures and ‘common-sense’ rhetoric around ‘value for money’ become normalised, the education sector continues to transform into a site of battle; a hierarchical competition of economic Darwinism. Higher Education has not been immune to this seemingly irresistible cultural hegemony, embracing its own system of valuation, validation and competition through adoption of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Conducting a Policy Archaeology (Scheurich 2014), I seek to show that the TEF embeds a neoliberal Governmentality, aimed at entrenching marketisation and industrialisation at the expense of teaching excellence. Through exploration of the policy’s inception, the TEF can be viewed as an apparatus of industrialisation and represents one within a consort of educational policies which seek to devalue music education.

Introduction

Music Education in the United Kingdom continues to be subject to a process of systematic marginalisation and dismantlement. Despite valiant efforts by multiple stakeholders across all stages of state funded education and schooling, the rationale for the continued support for music education in schools, colleges and higher education has weakened to the point of crisis. The constriction of musical activity in schools has not occurred through any significant change in the nature of music education itself however, but through transformation of how it is ‘thought about’ by a society who increasingly edifies and reinforces a grid of social regularities predicated upon the logic of neoliberal, capitalist and ‘market-led’ principles of value and worth. As Education ceases to be visible as a social good, it’s worth is subverted towards individualistic mechanistic transubstantiations of private cultural capital towards private economic gain, functioning as ‘meritocratic’ apparatus for widening inequality and class divide. As a music educator with experience at all stages of the UK state sector, I have experienced the disquieting emotions of the continual ‘turning of the screw’ against mobilisation of the powerful personal, social and critical transformations I know music education can catalyse. Further investigation of the forces operating within this ideological fixation and the processes towards contemporary rationale is necessary to both understand the basis for this anxiety but also to strategise opposition and, more positively, the imagination of utopian futures.

My agency and activity as a music educator is currently, predominantly, within higher education and, consequently, I am interested in the investigating the policy landscape which contextualises ‘common-sense’ decision making at this level and the implications for music and its sustainability. How, for example, is higher music education affected by ‘industrial’

visions of educational functionality and, more importantly, to what extent is complicit policy enactment reinforcing similar ideological rationale? What is the future for higher education music in the UK and to what extent is self-strangulation inevitable through higher education's adoption of neoliberalising, industrial, processes of policy formation; policy ideological infused with that already proving disastrous for UK schools? In this study I aim to conduct a policy analysis of the Teaching Education Framework using a Policy Archaeology methodology. This methodology examines the social regularities which allow specific policy problems and solutions to come into view and reveals the ideological contexts for this fixing of socially regulated 'governmentality'. I hope to reveal the conditions for the policy adoption of the Teaching Excellence Framework and the possible implications for the future marginalisation of music education.

The Teaching Excellence Framework

The Teaching Excellence Framework has become an accepted system of seemingly objective measurement of teaching quality within the UK Higher Education (HE) sector. Since its inception, it has functioned as a driver of rapid sectoral change, impacting significantly upon stakeholders. First introduced within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' Green Paper (BIS 2015), the TEF constitutes an important aspect of the subsequent 'policy ensemble' (DfE 2016, BIS 2016a, BIS 2016b), culminating in the Higher Education Research Act (2017).

The TEF awards Higher Education providers with a Bronze, Silver or Gold rating based on their performance against benchmarked metrics. A range of data sources are used as proxy measures to ascertain student's assessment of 'the teaching on my course' 'assessment and feedback', and the 'academic support' they receive. 'Continuation' rates, levels of 'employment or further study' and graduate's securing of 'highly skilled employment or further study' are combined with provider statements to form a judgement on the quality of teaching at registered institutions.

Primarily concerned with ensuring 'clear incentives for higher education institutions to deliver value to students and taxpayers' (BIS 2016b), the TEF rewards 'successful' institutions with 'reputational and financial incentives' (BIS 2015). Although the framework's aim, benevolent as it would appear, is to promote and reward teaching excellence, the TEF caused controversy across the sector at inception with significant concerns raised relating to its ability to deliver positive outcomes.

A range of critical perspectives were voiced through this process of policy formation and adoption. One can only measure what is defined, with 'Teaching Excellence' representing a repeatably contested term requiring further research and definition (Ashwin 2017). One study, aiming to uncover consensus, found that most participants involved found it impossible to measure teaching excellence, undermining the central premise of the framework (Wood & Su 2017). Use of proxy measures within the TEF also attracted criticism with the supposed correlation between student satisfaction and teaching quality particularly contestable (Gunn 2018), measuring the wrong things (Race 2017). Most damning is where the TEF was viewed as a negative pedagogic force, poised to reduce standards due to cost

pressures (Barkas et al 2017), constituting a policy mechanism for surveillance and control (Heaney & Mackenzie 2017). The conclusion from sector groups was that 'there are genuine concerns about how the assessment defines and measures teaching excellence' (Universities UK 2017b, p.2). Student groups also agreed that the TEF was unlikely to improve teaching quality (Oxford Student Union, BIS 2016a)

With such widespread condemnation at both consultative stage and in implementation, it seems necessary to ask; how did the TEF come to be implemented and under what social conditions? What are the ideological underpinnings of this policy, what are the potential harms and are there parallels across the wider UK education sector which could be made?

Policy Archaeology: Digging for 'Social Regularities'

Policy Archaeology was introduced by James Scheurich as a 'radically different approach to policy studies in education' (Scheurich 1994, p.297). Scheurich aims to reconceptualise policy studies to be primarily concerned with, and framed by, the 'social construction' of policy problems/solutions, asking how a 'grid of social regularities' interact with policy action, reaction and enactment. Policy Archaeology offers a highly appropriate methodological framework to examine the conditions (societal, political and ideological) that brought about the application of the TEF as an 'acceptable', although not widely merited, means of measuring Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes within the UK Higher Education sector.

Policy Archaeology has not been widely employed as a methodological tool for policy analysis. However, it has found some utility by policy analysts, particularly in relation to the social regularities that contextualise policy relating to bullying in schools. Bailey (2017) and Walton (2010) both use Policy Archaeology to uncover ways of understanding ideological and cultural aspects of bullying policy in relation to their own grid of social regularities (Walton 2010), e.g. how policy interacts with Catholic ideology within Irish schools (Bailey 2017). Policy Archaeology has also been considered in comparison to other existing methods of policy analysis (Gale 2001).

Policy Archaeology of the social construction of problems, and associated policy solutions, challenges the policy analyst to identify the 'constitutive grid of conditions, assumptions, forces which make the emergence of a social problem' possible and 'to investigate how a social problem becomes visible as a social problem' (Scheurich 1994, p.300). More radically, policy analysts are required to examine policy studies itself, reflecting on the nature of how these constitutive grid of conditions influence, and are embedded within, the wider theoretical discipline and within the individual analyst. Through the counting, labelling and description of problems and problem groups, policy analysts are 'key in the construction of such problems and groups and...legitimize these constructions' (Scheurich 1994, p.311). Policy archaeologists are concerned with uncovering how policy problems and possible solutions come into view, predicated on the fundamental tenet that only 'acceptable' solutions can be adopted by a society viewing themselves, and their problems, through a particular socio-economic-political-historical lens; what exists as viewable inside the 'overton window' as acceptable, 'sensible' and politically available policy solutions.

Policy Archaeology provides a framework for examining policy and associated issues of 'social construction' through the transitional 'passing' through of four arenas. The four arenas act as particular lenses to view both the policy and the constitutive grid of regularities, encouraging analysts to move around these arenas until new insights are exhausted. The arenas, whilst distinct, are semi-permeable and Scheurich recognises overlaps and shared aspects. In brief, the four arenas explore: 1) The study of the social construction of social problems, 2) The identification of the network of social regularities that contextualise problems, 3) The study of the social construction of the range of acceptable policy solutions and 4) The study of the social functions of policy studies itself (Scheurich 1994). What are the social problems which the TEF seeks to 'solve' and what constitutes the grid of social regularities which the TEF exists within and therefore mirrors?

Through the passing of the policy through these arenas, primarily 2 and 3, I seek to uncover and reveal the social regularities the TEF exists within and how these manifest within the policy. How does the policy explicitly reflect, and reinforce, this grid of social regularities and how can conclusions lead towards a praxis based (Freire 1972) response for change? To what extent is there potential to alter what may be 'viewable' as problems and solutions into the future?

The Grid of Social Regularities (Arena 2)

Scheurich, in relation to his case study applying Policy Archaeology to school services for 'previously ignored' groups, identifies five social regularities, categories which can form a language to describe social interaction, forms of 'Capital' and acceptable/unacceptable interactions between social agents ('gender, race, class, governmentality and professionalization'). One of these regularities is 'Governmentality', a 'kind of governance that counts, describes, defines, that brings everything under its gaze' (Scheurich 1994, p.306), a kind of governmental rationality that equates well-being to that which can be counted (Scheurich 1994). This definition of Governmentality is underpinned by his belief of the larger liberal world view, collectively assuming that free enterprise economies are the best (Scheurich 1994).

'Freedom of enterprise' and 'market freedom' relate to Neoliberal ideology, linked to governmentality by Foucault (Lemke 2001) in his lecture at the Collège de France. The link between neoliberalism, regulation and governmentality has also been made by multiple commentators (e.g. Olssen & Peters 2005) and has become central to discourse of and from the sector. The literature widely supports the view that the nature of HE governance and policy activity reflects the domination of Neoliberal ideology, supporting Scheurich's view of liberal governmentality representing an important, and legitimate, aspect of the 'grid of social regularities' to be examined. Discursive activity linking Higher Education to Neoliberalism is, therefore, important in understanding the social regularities HE, and HE policy exist within.

Neoliberalisation and Higher Education

Neoliberalism has been defined in many overlapping ways, primarily highlighting the centrality of 'The Market' to act as a mechanism for competition, individuality and as a solution to social problems in the best interests of society's individuals. Bhopal's (2018) selected definition illustrates explicitly the relationship between policy and ideology; policy not just of neoliberalism but AS neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism has been defined as:

'... an ensemble of economic and social policies, forms of governance, and discourses and ideologies that promote individual self-interest, unrestricted flows of capital, deep reductions in the cost of labour and sharp retrenchment of the public sphere. Neoliberals champion privatisation of social goods and withdrawal of government from provision for social welfare on the premise that competitive markets are more effective and efficient'
(Bhopal 2018 p.2)

This definition links policy ensembles (TEF) with forms of governance (governmentality), ideologies (neoliberalism) and discourses (literature on neoliberalism in HE) forming a convincing platform to explore the grid of regularities as applied to the TEF. It is also interesting to note the synergetic intersectionality between neoliberalism and racial inequality which both Scheurich, in his case study highlighting mutations of White Supremacy, and Bhopal identify; this definition is positioned at the very beginning of 'White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society' (Bhopal 2018)!

Within 'How we got here: UK higher education under neoliberalism', Radice states that neoliberalism remains the dominant political philosophy across the world and its utility 'stems from the multiple key functions of HE within capitalism' such as 'providing higher level work skills' (Radice 2013). 'There is a common set of assumptions and practices driving the transformation of higher education into an adjunct of corporate power and values' (Giroux 2014) with the sector reaching a point of deep neoliberal entrenchment ceaselessly framed by the logic of marketisation (Canaan 2017). This marketisation is viewable from multiple angles such as the adoption of principles of marketing principles (Askehave 2007) and customer survey analysis (Lucas 2018), importing the strategies and methods of private business to public institutions (Connell 2013), exemplifying a new capitalist state formation (Ainley 2004).

Discourse has also altered to mirror this institutional shift, reinforcing and making real this new 'reality'. The overwhelming weight of discourse relating to the marketisation within HE is convincing, the marketisation of higher education is linked to neoliberal capitalism (Cruikshank 2016) with successive government policy discourses moving to emphasise only the economic role of HE (Barkas et al 2017), framing Universities as competing businesses selling products in the free market to student customers (Fairclough 1993). Similar themes of discourse also emerge from within the institution with academic leaders mirroring, echoing and reinforcing neoliberal and neoliberalising market-based logic (Mautner 2005). 'The Assault on Universities' comes from all angles, resulting in the UK's Higher Education sector transforming 'into a patchwork of academic supermarkets'. (Freedman 2011).

The TEF has also been directly linked to this predominantly neoliberalist, marketising, agenda in transformation of the wider HE sector (Barkas et al 2017). Not only linked to neoliberalist ideology, some commentators highlight the central role TEF plays in depicting neoliberal transformation, with the TEF playing an 'important role in neoliberal interventionism in English higher education' (Cruickshank 2016). Gunn identifies the TEF as the framework of the neoliberal market (Gunn 2018) with its implementation subjecting HE to further 'processes of neoliberalisation, management, control, supervision, metricisation, marketisation, casualisation and precarisation' (Heaney & Mackenzie 2017, no page no). Quite clearly, HE is in the grip of neoliberal ideology with TEF central to, and a continuation of, this condition. However, how does the TEF, specifically, embed neoliberal ideology and where can this be identified within the wider policy ensemble?

How does TEF function an instrument of neoliberalism? Policy Analysis

Neoliberalism seeks to establish 'the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security or environmental pollution) then they must be created' (Harvey 2005, p.2). The creation of market driven systems is central to the neoliberal project. In fact, 'Neoliberals have had astonishing success in creating markets for things whose commodification was once almost unimaginable' (Connell 2013, p.100). How does the TEF aim to create a market, and in doing so, reflect neoliberal ideology and the associated grid of social regularities?

There are many definitions of what a market is, its features and characteristics (e.g. Business Dictionary (2018), The Balance (2018), Important India (2016)). Although exact terms vary slightly, definitions identify and coalesce around shared themes of how a healthy market operates

- Creates systems of differential pricing to distinguish products.
- Promotes competition between producers.
- Uses regulatory bodies to oversee fairness within the market.

Extracting indicative text from 'Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' (BiS 2016b) white paper, a policy document fundamental to the implementation of the TEF, I will illustrate how characteristics of the market are proposed. I will also then identify how these characteristics are also referenced within the wider literature, suggesting the 'effect' of the policy.

Differential Pricing

Problem:

'We need action to address the ... variation in quality and outcomes experience by some students'. (p.5)

'Courses are inflexible, based on the traditional three-year undergraduate model, with insufficient innovation and provision of two-year degrees and degree apprenticeships'. (p.8)

Solution:

'TEF is intended to generate reputational as well as financial incentives. The reputational advantage that will accrue to providers achieving the highest TEF ratings will be substantial ... But we think that teaching excellence should be recognised by providing for the best providers to maintain their tuition fees in line with inflation.' (p.49)

'New and innovative providers offering high quality higher education continue to face significant and disproportionate challenges to establishing themselves in the sector. Making it easier for these providers to enter and expand will help drive up teaching standards overall' (p.9)

In effect:

Differential pricing will be introduced through the ability for the 'best providers' to raise their fees in line with inflation. Less successful providers will, consequently, be required to reduce their fees in real terms. This will have the effect of producing a market with products sold at different 'prices', reflecting the 'quality' and prestige of competing products. New providers will be able to charge significantly lower fees through accelerated degree programmes and two-year degrees, effectively slashing the overall 'investment', and debt accrued, of a degree programme.

Commodification of Higher Education begun during the Thatcher government through significant cuts in HE (Wilby 2013) resulting in a necessity for international students to be charged tuition fees, creating the ideological conditions for HE to be bought and sold like a market product (Canaan 2013). Subsequent increases in tuition fees have been linked to funding deficits and requirement to lighten the burden on the tax payer (IFS 2011). Most recently, the use of the National Student Survey, central to institution's TEF success (Gillard 2018), is being used as a proxy from price mechanism (Cruickshank 2016) with the TEF presented as an instrumental mechanism linked to tuition fee rises (Gillard 2018). Through this function it helps to objectify price mechanism, solving the negative political implications of 'direct' government intervention (Gunn 2018).

Promoting Competition

Problem:

'there is more to be done for our university system to fulfil its potential as an engine of social mobility.'

'Many students are dissatisfied with the provision they receive.'

'Employers are suffering skills shortages.'

'Courses are inflexible.'

*'At the heart of this lies insufficient competition and a lack of informed choice'
(p.7-8)*

Solution:

'Competition between providers in any market incentivises them to raise their game, offering consumers a greater choice of more innovative and better-quality products and services at lower cost. Higher education is no exception.' (p.8)

Universities 'create the knowledge, capability and expertise that drive competitiveness and nurture the values that sustain our open democracy' (p5)

We will make it quicker and easier for new high quality challenger institutions to enter the market and award their own degrees. (p6)

There is no compelling reason for incumbents to be protected from high quality competition. We want a globally competitive market that supports diversity' (p.8)

Making it easier for these providers to enter and expand will help drive up teaching standards overall; enhance the life chances of students; drive economic growth; and be a catalyst for social mobility. (p9)

By introducing more competition and informed choice into higher education, we will deliver better outcomes and value for students, employers and the taxpayers who underwrite the system. (p.8)

In effect:

'Rewarding excellence breeds competition' (Race 2017); the nature of excellence defines that not everything can be so. Through the creation of hierarchising systems and the rationing of the 'best', gold standard products, the TEF effectively introduces competitive market structures (Connell 2013). Heaney & Mackenzie (2017, no page number) conclude that and the white paper, 'reifies, glorifies and fetishises competition and marketisation'.

The notion that increased competition will act as an 'engine of social mobility' is at odds with Ainley's view that competition within the 'market-state' has increased division in society with inequality widening as a result of neoliberal marketisation (Ainley 2004). Within these conditions, and as HEI's look to corporate programmes to develop their competitive edge (Askehave 2007) through adoption of corporate practices and business models (Barkas et al 2017)., more competition is likely to reduce the quality of teaching and research capacity and autonomy.

Use of regulatory bodies

Problem:

'HEFCE's purpose, role and powers have become outdated' (p.15)

'As recognised by the Competition and Markets Authority, the particular characteristics of the higher education sector mean that proportionate regulation is needed to protect the interests of students, employers, and taxpayers' (p.15)

Solution:

'A new Office for Students will put competition and choice at the heart of sector regulation: it will operate a more risk-based approach so that we can focus attention where it is needed most to drive up quality.' (p6)

'The OfS will be a consumer-focused market regulator' (p.16)

'we will expect a clear demonstration of quality, and the OfS will have the powers to intervene rapidly if it has reason to believe that quality in any institution is failing. This will ensure that we maintain a high and rigorous bar for entry into the system and for providers where there is cause of concern, whilst significantly reducing the burden of inspection on those providers, whatever their historical status, where we are confident that they are performing well.' (p. 33)

In effect:

Regulation of the sector will move to a new government department, the Office for Students (OfS). In effect, this now means that HE is regulated primarily by the government, subject to the ideological objectives of the mechanics of marketisation. The OfS is not a regulator of Higher Education but of the HE *market*. The commitment to market economy principles are highlighted further through association with the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA).

'Quality' is seen to be an important feature of the rhetoric (*our primary goal is to raise the overall level of quality* p.10) with the OfS holding powers to intervene if the 'high and rigorous bar for entry' is not met or maintained. However, this appears to be misleading when correlated with the CMA's own attitude towards 'quality' in a competitive market.

Within 'An effective regulatory framework for higher education: policy paper' (CMA 2015 p.5) the CMA suggest that a reformed regulatory framework should 'Regulate for a baseline of quality' and that new providers must meet this 'baseline level of quality' but, critically, that this 'baseline level of quality is kept to a minimum to promote competition'.

The rationale given for requirement of reformed regulation, in the form of the OfS, is 'as recognised by the CMA' but with the OfS's commitment for high standards and quality contrary to CMA's own recognitions! A commitment that quality should be 'kept to a minimum to promote competition' is damning and reveals that the OfS's role is, indeed, to

regulate quality but, in effect, low quality. Low thresholds for quality will enable new providers to enter the market place, as intended, able to offer cheaper courses of lower quality, suppressing quality across the sector. How 'low quality' 'protects students' is unclear. The lowering of minimum quality standards, designed to encourage new providers to compete in the market is in direct opposition to the seemingly benevolent aims of the TEF, to raise quality. The neoliberal, market-led, ideology which provides the explanatory framework for the TEF requires the expansion of competitive markets and differential pricing of products which, naturally, leads to lower quality, lower cost providers.

The Range of Possible Solutions (Arena 3)

It is clear that the TEF, and associated policy ensemble, sought to marketise higher education at the expense of quality. However, how did this come to be an accepted solution to the perceived problems facing the sector?

'for any way of thought to become dominant, a conceptual apparatus has to be advanced that appeals to our intuitions and instincts, to our values and our desires, as well as to the possibilities inherent in the social world we inhabit. If successful, this conceptual apparatus becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question' (Harvey 2005, p.5)

It has already been noted that Neoliberalism is the dominant contemporary ideology. Harvey identifies that an aspect of 'domination' is in the limiting of possibilities for societal change. Scheurich concurs; the grid of social regularities 'constitute the range of acceptable policy solutions' (Scheurich 1994, p.303). From this perspective, the TEF was not necessarily the *best* solution for society but that most closely aligned to the dominant *vision* of societal order. 'Changes in society have created a context conducive for the ranking of university teaching' (Gunn 2018, p.132), as found within the TEF.

'Policy archaeology suggests that social regularities are 'productive' and 'reproductive' in the sense that the regularities constitute what is socially visible or credible' (Scheurich 1994, p. 302). Only what is 'visible' can be identified as a problem and, through ideological restriction of visibility, what can be viewed as a solution is also both limited and constitutive of ideology. In this sense, the dominant ideological codes not only produce the visibility of problems, that which come into view as being problematic, but also reproduce, and reinforce the dominant ideology itself. Certain solutions become 'commonsensical' through strict adherence with the grid of regularities, rendering alternative solutions invisible, unacceptable or insane. As Fairclough concurs, discourse is a socially shaped and socially shaping action, contextualised by the norms of historical and social situations (Fairclough 1993)

Scheurich suggests that social agents are not 'self-consciously aware of the social regularities shaping their subjectivities' (Scheurich 1994, p.303), linking this policy methodology to stated origins of Foucauldian thought. Foucault (1973) presents the concept of the 'already encoded eye' (xxi), things that belong 'to a certain unspoken order'(xx). Things which one does not need to speak OF due to them being WITHIN all that is spoken.

Ideology can be defined as a process of encoding, 'as a body of meaning and values encoding certain interests relevant to social power...that are unifying, action-orientated, rationalizing, legitimating, universalising, and naturalizing' which promote forth 'a system of strategies and tactics that lead to the commonplace acceptance of a particular system of beliefs' (Saunders 2015, p. 402).

Only policy problems/solutions that appears within the range of sight of this encoded eye are recognisable. The grid of regularities act as 'preconceptual glasses or frames through which human actions and categories, including social problems and policy solutions, become socially defined' (Scheurich 1994, p.306). The 'lens' of neoliberalism is clearly required when viewing the policy schematics of contemporary governmentality and in developing an understanding of the impacts upon and within HE (Caanan 2013).

Invisible alternatives 'never appear within dominant social discourses because they are incongruent with the dominant social order' (Scheurich 1994, p.306) this is because 'the social order would be deligitimized if it was readily apparent that inequalities, for instance, were merely historical social constructions' (Scheurich 1994, p.306). Social agents become encoded through ideological domination and, subsequently, encode through commonsensical discourse and action in alignment with the grid of regularities; a seemingly unstoppable process of continual neoliberalisation. In this sense Higher Education, through policies such as the TEF, is encoded by, with and reproductive of neoliberal ideology, producing citizens with the 'attitudes' needed to contribute to the national and international market places, complicit through socially regulated symbolic violations (Bourdieu 1984). As Margaret Thatcher, the great neo-liberalist, famously said, "There is no alternative", or more accurately, there BECOMES no alternative as hegemonic logic limits the view of what can be possible in the future.

Neoliberalisation as Industrialisation

Despite the concerns raised by the sector through the TEF's inception and the political intention to effectively lower quality and standards, the UK Higher Education has adopted the TEF and its 'Olympian' medal standards. As institutions continue to feature their TEF credentials prominently on websites and marketing materials, reforming learning environments and pedagogy to more 'successfully' achieve outcomes dictated by specific metrics valued by the TEF, the neoliberalising potential of the policy has become a reality. The marketisation of Higher Education has been complicitly enacted by this sector once widely critical of the foundational principles and assumptions presented. Institutions have become reconfigured as reproductive engines of the encoded, visible potential of hegemonic rationality. 'Adapting' for survival within hegemony (Freire 1974) rather than risky rejection.

'Neoliberalism has a definite view of education, understanding it as human capital formation. It is the business of forming the skills and attitudes needed by a productive workforce ... producing an ever-growing mass of profits for the market economy' (Connell 2013, p.104). Higher Education becomes industrialised, and industrial, as alternative forms of value are modified to view primarily only the economic outcomes of graduate activity,

'employability' and earning power as measures of quality. As marketisation requires differential pricing, the debt accrued (and associated precarity) by graduates must be offset by tax receipts. As neoliberal logic constructs educational institutions as the factories where educational products are consumed by customers towards common-sense investment towards profitable futures, students become re-cast as units of economic capital potential; more akin to raw-materials cast into 'goods' (e.g. viable economic actors) through institutional mechanisms (i.e. 'excellent' teaching) than 'citizens' motivated and incentivised to imagine a wider range of social values.

Those 'inefficient' factories of the 'knowledge economy', those which are unsuccessful in outputting graduate's with profitable capital quantities, are duly awarded lower resources and positions on the competitive market platforms which seek to compare institutions. To marketise, neoliberalise and industrialise is to create systems of competition which result in hierarchical ordering against specific conceptions of only economic value. Our culture validates these specific units of value which retro-actively inform the policies and courses of actions which create the systems of worth. The connection between neoliberalism, metric based performance measures and the industrialisation of higher education can be clearly viewed through policy analysis of problems, solutions and adaptive behaviour by both institutions in a broad sense and the 'cogs in the machine' of HE's primary protagonists (students, teachers and administrators). The adoption of these types of performance measures represents severe threat for artistic subjects prophesised within parallel policy machinations playing out within UK education.

Subject TEF, the EBacc and the Demise of Music Education

As the TEF secures its rational adoption, the next stage in the policy narrative is the subject-level or subject specific TEF (OfS 2020). It is unclear at the time of writing what this may involve or how, or when, findings from the subject-level TEF pilot may be implemented but there is already evidence of differential, negative, treatment of artistic subjects (e.g. those who typically do not produce economically profitable graduates). No more directly is this seen than the recent funding cut to arts courses in England rationalised as reprioritising 'taxpayers' money towards subjects that support the NHS, science, technology and engineering, and the specific needs of the labour market.' (Weale 2021, no page number) What is clear is that where subject hierarchies have been drawn, through this 'objective' lens of graduate outcomes, music education has been negatively impacted with catastrophic effect. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a prime example of this.

The EBacc is a suite of subjects schools and students are encouraged to select with the government's aspiration that 90% of schools will be offering the EBacc by 2021. The rationale for the EBacc and adoption by schools is to provide the fullest range of employment options. Once again, the link between educational policy and employment outcomes are central here. A leaflet provided by the Department for Education to parents clearly highlights the primacy of employability in subject selection but also in progression towards higher education: 'While your child may not have decided on their future career path yet, choosing the EBacc at GCSE gives them access to a full range of employment options when they leave secondary school and the broad

knowledge that employers are looking for. If they are thinking of going to university, the EBacc is also recommended by Britain's most prestigious universities.' (DfE 2018a, no page number)

The omission of music and other artistic subjects from the EBacc has resulted in schools turning away from the offer of Music; the hierarchising of subjects within the policy has successfully impacted upon school leader's, student's and parent's behaviours in a strikingly effective and targeted manner. An All-Party Parliamentary group report on the state of Music Education concluded that 'Government policy, particularly around accountability measures like the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), has significantly negatively impacted on music education in schools in England...causing untold damage to music and many other creative subjects in school (ISM 2019, pp.2-3). This damaging marginalisation has resulted in decreased curriculum time allocation rationalised through the subject hierarchy the EBacc 'confirms' through the logic of market-based neoliberalism. Like the internalisation of the TEF by HE leaders, this logic has been adopted by a school's music sector adapting for survival, justifying the value of music as a proxy for knock-on gains in those most 'valuable' subjects of mathematics and English.

The EBacc evidences the fatal damage neoliberal 'subject-specific' policy making has wrought on music education. The eBacc has effectively weakened the pipeline of prospective students which may have considered study within Higher Education, the sector which is likely to soon face its own subjection to hierarchising rationality through the subject-level TEF. As Music in HE education likely becomes weakened through both negotiations in 'value' through adoption of TEF and fewer 'customers' into the market due to marginalisation in school, music education in HE will certainly suffer, becoming only the preserve of the elite. Rather than rejection of the EBacc, mirroring HEs own weak adaptation and complicity in adoption of the TEF, there are calls for music to be included as an EBacc subject (Underhill 2021), further echoing the sense that alternatives to neoliberal logic are impossible, only complicity to the system is possible for survival.

As the incurable link between comparable notions of 'value' as applied across subject hierarchies, true to the confirmatory and confirming logic of neoliberalism, continue to infuse political discourse, a clear warning sounds that future evolution of the TEF is unlikely to benefit those subjects whose value lie outside of graduate earning data. Students are implicated within this rhetoric, presenting their supposed problems as basis for future policy solutions by education ministers. Neoliberal logic is invoked by higher education ministers on behalf of students to justify this neoliberal, 'value for money' rationale. '(S)tudents are far more aware of the bottom line. They want to make sure their chosen course represents good value for money, both in terms of the quality of education it provides and the future earnings it is likely to secure them' (Donelan 2020 no page number). Student's 'problems' are aligned with those of the tax payer in relation to 'underperforming degrees' (as if the courses themselves are underperforming and therefore ripe for marginalisation); 'The clutch of underperforming degrees is a problem for students – it is likely they include many of the courses whose students feel they are not getting value for money...They are also a problem for the taxpayer, since courses where students tend not to earn graduate salaries after graduation account for a disproportionate share of the costs to the public purse' (DfE 2018b, no page number). The Department for Education frames these policy problems and solutions as benevolent instruments of meritocratic sensibility, consistently linking 'quality'

and 'value' to the market place of jobs, economic capital and industrial outcomes. 'I also want to be clear that we will look forensically at courses to ensure they are high quality, and lead to good graduate outcomes' (DfE 2021, no page number). 'We must never forget that the purpose of education is to give people the skills they need to get a good and meaningful job' (DfE 2020, no page number). If we are to 'never forget' neoliberal governmentality, new futures become unimaginable, confirming hegemonic complicity to an industrialised system of cultural decay.

Conclusion

Through use of Scheurich's Policy Archaeology, it is evident that the TEF is encoded with, and reinforces, the dominant grid of social regularities. The clear relationship between the policy's 'market led' principles align with wider neoliberal ideology, achieving a 'common-sensical' tone within the context of existing possibilities of 'visible' action. The wider policy ensemble act as technologies of power and weapons of symbolic violence, as discourse around the nature of HE normalises, justifies and legitimises pursuit of individualistic, purely economic, outcomes at the expense of a wider societal good. The TEF seeks to 'value what is measurable rather than measuring what is valuable' (Klemencic & Ashwin 2015, p.8).

The University reflects the society it is within, is an 'expression of the age' (Flexner 1930). Through this continual reflection it eventually becomes crystallised in its own, new, image; echoing, reinforcing, and legitimising the initial, societal image it reflects. 'The University' is from society, of society and also TO society and constructs society as much as it is constructed by society. 'The primary function of these social constructions is to provide a definition of correct, productive behaviour to citizens who are already acting in concert with the social order' (Scheurich 1994, p.312). The social regularities which present policy problems and solutions become self-fulfilling when guided towards limiting potential for change in the future. Hegemony resides within this grid of social regularities, or perhaps IS the grid of regularities.

There are now plentiful examples of how neoliberal, industrialising policy negatively impacts upon subjects not conforming to the logic of economic output. To adapt to this system may facilitate temporary survival but, ultimately, complicity confirms this ideological rationale, creating conditions for future narrowing of a window of agency. As Neary provokes (Neary 2016), seeking alternatives to neoliberalisation should become central to stakeholders across the HE sector but with the neoliberal project seeking to dis-power both academics, through precarious work conditions, and students/graduates, encoded and saddled by debt there are many challenges. Continual reflective questioning by all HE stakeholders, especially within artistic and musical arenas must take place. How do we exercise our agency and how does this reinforce or subvert dominant ideology? Are our intentions aligned with our actions and what powers restrict these? To what extent do we have the opportunity to make change through exercise of our agency or modes of cultural capital? Who or what are we teaching for and how does this manifest within curriculum and pedagogy? How free are we to make change and why is this the case? A mainstream existence of music education in higher education depends on a critical rejection of neoliberal logic across all stages of the education system; to only adapt is to self-destruct.

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