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Globalization, edu-business and network governance: the policy sociology of Stephen J. Ball and rethinking education policy analysis

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This paper traces developments across Stephen J. Ball's policy sociology in education *oeuvre* and considers their implications for doing research on education policy today. It begins with an account of his policy sociology trilogy from the 1990s, which outlined his conception of the policy cycle consisting of the contexts of influence, text production and policy practice. It then considers the emergence of a strengthening focus on the global in Ball's work, noting the significance of the 1998 paper, 'Big policies/small world', which demonstrated how policy problems and solutions circulate through global discourses, but are always recontextualized within national policies and practices. Next, the paper reflects on two recent books: *Global Education Inc* and *Networks, New Governance and Education*. The former is concerned with the rescaling of the contexts of policy and the enhanced significance of both international organizations and global edu-business in the education policy cycle and the implications for doing policy analysis. The latter employs a network ethnography approach and provides an account of the new network governance in education: the rise of heterarchies, a melange of bureaucracy, markets and networks. The paper concludes by suggesting this account is indicative of the topological turn in culture and social theory. The conclusion gestures towards the implications of this for the policy cycle conception and for doing education policy analysis today, suggesting that Ball's recent work provides the scaffolds of such an approach.

Keywords: Stephen J. Ball; globalization; policy sociology; edu-business; network governance; topology

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the recognition of global contexts, frames and fields of policy making in Stephen J. Ball's policy sociology research and theorizing. We trace the transition from a national focus in his *oeuvre* (Lingard 1996), more specifically a focus on policy developments in education in England, to the later work which embraces the global framing of policy. We see the influential, widely cited and anthologized paper, *Big Policies/Small World* (Ball 1998), as broadening Ball's analytical focus to direct greater attention to global/national imbrications in policy production and implementation. The early work proffered a framework for policy analysis which has had ongoing significance since its publication (Ball 1990, 1994; Bowe, Ball, and Gold 1992; Gewirtz, Ball, and Bowe 1995). Ball developed a non-linear, interactive policy cycle approach to understand policy processes from influence to text production to practice, with subsequent additions of evaluative frameworks in terms of

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first-order policy effects, which are measured against the policy's own articulated goals, and second-order effects, which require a more normative assessment framed by the analyst's construction of social justice. While this framework for policy analysis in education has remained influential to the present, the need to globalize this policy cycle (Lingard 2000) approach has been recognized by Ball in his later work. Indeed, we argue that his later work on edu-businesses and transnational organizations, along with the concept of network governance, hold some challenges for rethinking the policy cycle.

We argue that Ball's concern in recent work with the significance of global factors in education policy points the way to new areas of analysis and research for policy sociology in education. We are thinking of the account of the global policy ensemble in *The Education Debate* (Ball 2008, 2013a) and in particular of the new book, *Global Education Inc* (Ball 2012a), which we see as a companion piece to the more nationally focused but globally framed *Education plc* (Ball 2007). The account of network governance in education, in the new book with Carolina Junemann (Ball and Junemann 2012), also maps the transnational and topological dimensions of new policy spaces.[1] The concept of the global policy ensemble resonates with the idea of the emergence of a global education policy field and recognizes the role of international organizations, such as the OECD, World Bank and UNESCO, in its construction and in the convergence of policy pressures on national schooling systems (Lingard and Rawolle 2011).

Global Education Inc is particularly significant in its extension of the global focus beyond recognition of the role of supranational, multilateral agencies and NGOs to include the role and impact of edu-business and philanthropic trusts in the global education policy field. Ball (2012a) states that 'education policy analysis can no longer sensibly be limited to within the nation state – the fallacy of methodological territorialism', and argues further that 'policy analysis must also extend its purview beyond the state and the role of multilateral agencies and NGOs to include transnational business practices' (93). It is noteworthy that Ball uses 'transnational' here, a concept that Vertovec (2009, 4) defines as 'social morphology, as type of consciousness, as mode of cultural reproduction, as avenue of capital, as site of political engagement, and as reconstruction of 'place' or locality'.

In *Networks, New Governance and Education*, Ball and Junemann (2012) document developments beyond new public management and examine the rise of network governance in education. Their account derives from the use of network ethnography and while the focus of the book is on new policy networks in England, of necessity there is also a global focus, as networks stretch topologically across the space of the globe. This work demonstrates how policy is now networked across state and private sector actors and across new policy spaces. Our focus in this paper is on the significance of the arguments of *Global Education Inc* and *Networks, New Governance and Education* for researching and understanding education policy in global contexts today.

In what follows, we will provide a brief account of the early nation-centric work of Ball, before considering the *Big Policies/Small World* paper as a transition to an analytical approach with a global purview, even when the focus is more specifically on national policy contexts. We then document the presence of the global in the later work, alluding briefly to *Education plc* (Ball 2007) and *How Schools Do Policy: Policy Enactment in Secondary Schools* (Ball, Braun, and Maguire 2012). However, the major focus of the paper is on *Global Education Inc* (Ball 2012a) and *Networks, New Governance and Education* (Ball and Junemann 2012). The former considers *inter alia* the role of edu-business and edu-philanthropy in contemporary education policy globally, as well as the work of international organizations. We will locate this account against the global policy ensemble analysis of the *Education Debate* and the account of privatization(s) in *Education plc*.

In adumbrating the argument of the *Networks* book, we will also refer to Ball's (2013b) recent monograph, *Foucault, Power and Education*, and particularly the mention of new topological dynamics in education policy. We suggest that the growing prevalence of conceptual frameworks focusing on networks, assemblages, dispositifs and topology in social theory, and increasingly in policy sociology (e.g. Webb 2011; Rizvi and Lingard 2011; Ruppert 2012; Bailey 2013), attest to the non-linear, complex and multidimensional dynamics that Ball has long argued must be carefully explored in education policy analysis. In conclusion, we consider the implications of the arguments and research outlined in these two recent books for understanding and researching global education policy, including what this might mean for thinking about the policy cycle in education today.

Stephen Ball's early policy sociology trilogy

In his 1990s trilogy, *Politics and Policy Making in Education* (Ball 1990), *Reforming Education and Changing Schools* (Bowe, Ball, and Gold 1992) and *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach* (Ball 1994), Ball set the foundations of policy sociology in education, which Ozga (1987) had defined as the application of social science approaches, both theories and methodologies, to the study of educational policy. The policy sociology approach was important because it provided a critical and contextualized account of policy steering of education systems, recognized that policy was more than text and included processes, while also acknowledging a recursive relationship between structure and agency across the policy cycle. This work was linked to the strengthening research significance of the *Journal of Education Policy*, of which Ball was an editor. In a way, we suggest that Ball actually set the originary or foundational canon of policy sociology in education with these significant books. Their publication and success reflected the fact that the Thatcherite project included attacks on the sociology of education in teacher education and her government's neo-liberal reforms drove schooling through policy and new technologies at a distance. In this context, policy took on greater significance with consequences for the intellectual field of the sociology of education. Many British-based sociologists of education turned their research focus to policy, as illustrated in the work of Ball, Dale (1989) and Ozga (1987, 2000).

We also need to recognize that policy sociology has been an approach to policy research in education with UK origins and has had most salience there and in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and continental Europe. It has had less impact in the USA, where policy study in education has tended to be located within the politics of education, or sometimes in educational administration, and has probably been less critical in orientation. This is exemplified if one looks at the contents of the recent *Handbook of Education Policy Research* (Sykes, Schneider, and Plank 2009) sponsored by the American Educational Research Association. It is interesting to observe the continuing impact of national research fields in the context of the globalization of research fields, which has involved more rapid flows of ideas, theories and methodologies across the space of the globe (see Hardy 2009) and the enhanced significance of the global in national policy cycles (e.g. Sellar and Lingard 2013).

Politics and Policy Making in Education (Ball 1990) provided a framework for understanding the role of the 'education state' in policy text production during the Thatcher period, particularly following the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the conservative 'cultural restorationism' within curriculum, set against the 'radical' neo-liberal restructuring of the state and other policy verities. The focus in this book was on the micro-politics inside the state that produced policy texts; the state here can be seen as a strategic-relational terrain (Jessop 2002). Much public policy literature has recognized the politics involved in agenda-setting, but here Ball was also acknowledging how politics inside the state affect policy production.

Reforming Education and Changing Schools (Bowe, Ball, and Gold 1992) was more focused on policy enactment – a focus thathas been recently taken up again in *How Schools do Policy: Policy Enactment in Secondary Schools* (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012). An important difference between the two books is that the former concentrates on England, while the latter gives more attention to the global contexts of contemporary policy enactment. Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) observe that 'the teacher is enrolled into grand political narratives of policy which link their classroom work with students to the processes of globalization and national economic competitiveness' (72–73). Here, we see the recognition that national policy for schooling is now framed by a meta-narrative about the role of schooling in the production of human capital to increase the productivity and competitiveness of national economies in the context of global capitalism. We see here, of course, policy constituting its context and that context is now clearly global (Lingard 2010). In the recent enactment book, Ball and colleagues also stress the significance of the contexts of any given school to considerations of policy enactment. They note:

> Polices enter different resource environments; schools have particular histories, buildings and infrastructures, staffing profiles, leadership experiences, budgetary situations and teaching and learning challenges (e.g. proportions of children with special educational needs (SEN), English as an additional language (EAL), behavioural difficulties, 'disabilities' and social and economic 'deprivations') and the demands of context interact. (Ball et al. 2012, 19)

Reforming Education (Bowe, Ball, and Gold 1992) outlined, for the first time, Ball's policy cycle approach that rejected a unidirectional account of policy from agenda setting through text production to implementation and evaluation – processes often described as linear in 'rational' and normative approaches to policy analysis. Ball rejected this oversimplified, linear-hierarchical account and was more concerned with the *realpolitik* of policy work; his was a critical approach to understanding actual policy making and policy processes. He conceptualized the non-linear, interactive, multidirectional reality of policy as both text and process across three interactive contexts: the context of influence, the context of text production, and the context of practice. This early cycle approach perhaps implicitly suggested an equivalence of power across these contexts, reflecting Ball's use of Foucault's relational account of power and downplaying the role of the state.

In *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach* (Ball 1994), Ball takes up where *Reforming Education* left off to further develop this policy cycle approach. To these three contexts, he added a further two contexts for policy analysts. The first was the context of outcomes, which goes beyond practice considerations or 'first-order effects' to 'second-order effects'; that is, the impact of policy as practice (later enactment) upon political matters such as social justice, equality and freedom. This additional context then leads almost inexorably to the addition of the context of political strategy, which concerns the development of political tactics to work against inequalities and injustices and to show the relational and capillary workings of power. In terms of first order effects, we can evaluate the policy in its own terms set against its own goals, while analysis in terms of second order effects requires some articulation of social justice to which we are committed as policy analysts. Thus, there are two possible measures of the context of outcomes here. Ball (1994, 1) also utilizes 'three epistemologies' in this work – 'critical policy analysis, post-structuralism and critical ethnography' – because he argues that 'the complexity and scope of policy analysis' demands a rejection of modernist parsimony of one theory applications. This has been an ongoing stance across his *oeuvre*.

In *Education Reform,* Ball (1994) also drew on the work of Michel Foucault, after editing a book on his work in 1990, to introduce the concept of policy as both discourse and text.

Policy as discourse frames what can be said and who can speak in respect of policy; this might be seen, perhaps inappropriately, as the structural 'determining' or 'framing' aspect of policy, in contrast to the possibilities of agency in reading policy as text and of mobilizing 'subjugated knowledge' in policy enactment. The Foucauldian influence was also evident in the relational, capillary forms of power that Ball now worked with. It is interesting that in his more recent authored book on Foucault (Ball 2013b, 124), Ball introduces the concept of 'dispositif' to account for the non-discursive and in recognition that Foucault did not argue that there was nothing beyond discourse understood in a textual sense. Foucault (in Bailey 2013, 5) defined dispositif as, 'A resolutely heterogeneous combination of "discourses", institutions, architectural edifices, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific pronouncements and philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions: in short, both things that were spoken of and things that were not'. There are significant implications for doing education policy analysis here, particularly in respect of the becoming topological of culture (Lury, Parisi, and Terranova 2012; Ruppert 2012) that we will consider later in this paper. Ball also recognizes this in his recent writing on Foucault:

> In Foucault's later work, this attention to the diversity of power can be read as a more decisive move to dispositif or to 'a "topological approach" that recognizes "patterns of correlations" and the strategic disposition of heterogeneous elements that constitute societies as particular realities' (Venn and Terranova, 2009, 5). That is the fitting together of disparate techniques, processes, practices and relationships within a regime of truth to form a grid of power which operates in many different ways from many different points. (Ball 2013b, 124)

Bailey (2013), a doctoral student of Ball, has taken up the concept of dispositif in a most interesting fashion to suggest a methodology for understanding education policy under conditions of globalized neo-liberalism. He depicts education, using Foucauldian concepts of dispositif and governmentality, as always in a state of becoming and constituted as both an '*idea*' and a '*material and governable field* of practices, culture and meaning' (Bailey 2013, 6). This extends Ball's policy sociology work using Foucault and recognizes, as Ball does, that policy can be seen as produced by discourse, but is also more than discourse.

In a way, Ball's (1994) definition of policy distils many of the policy analytical insights and advances in his 1990s policy sociology trilogy and is worth quoting in full:

> Policy is … an 'economy of power', a set of technologies and practices which are realized and struggled over in local settings. Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete in so far as they relate to or map onto the 'wild profusion' of local practice. Polices are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable. Policy as practice is 'created' in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom. Thus policy is no simple asymmetry of power. (Ball 1994, 10–11)

Here, we can see the gaps and relationships between policy and policy enactment, and how, in one sense, policy always simplifies, while practice in classrooms, or in other sites in the policy cycle, such as policy text production inside the state, is always complex and contingent. Bourdieu's (1998) argument about the state as holding the right to the universal, set against the contingent specificities of practices in the classroom and elsewhere, offers another productive way of thinking about refractions in policy enactment.

The turn to the global: 'big policies/small world'

Ball's paper, 'Big polices/small world: an introduction to international perspectives in education policy', was published in *Comparative Education* in 1998 and was his first concerted attempt to consider the implications of globalization for understanding and analysing

education policy. Ball's focus here was on vernacular national policy responses to the flows of global 'policyscapes'. It is interesting that the paper appeared in *Comparative Education*. This is a sub-discipline within educational research that has been revitalized in the post Cold War era of globalization, though we note the potential danger of it becoming a mode of governance, rather than a critical social science discipline, as argued by Novoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003) in their description of how comparison has become central to governance across both national and global scales (see Sellar and Lingard 2013). Think here, for example, of the new significance of the OECD's PISA and the IEA's TIMSS and PIRLS.

In considering the impact of globalization on education policy, Ball begins by making the distinction between the contingent specificities of policy, but also acknowledges the broader patterns and convergences. This is a most useful way to think about how globalizing policy discourses result in some convergence of policy rhetoric and policy problems that must be addressed, but at the same time how these are always manifest within nations, sub-national systems, schools and so on in translated, vernacular forms. Here, Ball note that state capacity (maybe also some elements of national sovereignty in the contemporary post-Westphalian context) has been affected by the globalization of the economy and of capital in the post-Cold War era, evident in the step away from Keynesian to neo-liberal policies and new managerialist state structures. He argues that global 'policyscapes' constitute new policy problems for national systems, but also imply 'magical solutions' to these problems as constituted; he outlines the significance of neo-liberalism, new institutional economics, performativity, public choice theory and new managerialism in respect of such solutions. These 'magical solutions', as he refers to them, have affected state policy-producing structures and the ideas expressed through them. They have also opened up spaces for edu-businesses, the analysis of which he takes up in detail in his later *Global Education Inc* (Ball 2012a), and 'policy entrepreneurs'. Ball describes the latter as those 'who "sell" their solutions in the academic and political market-place' (41). We think immediately of the global policy impact of the various McKinsey Reports on education systems (see Coffield 2012).

Ball makes the point that new policies often have to do as much to discredit earlier policies, practices and structures, as justify their new approaches. Policy, in a sense, always has a to appear to be newer and better than what has gone before; it has to imagine a better future. This is discursive and textual work. Lingard and Rawolle (2004) have reflected about this using Bourdieu to suggest that 'structural amnesia' is a feature of the logics of practice of policy production and of the policy field. Ball gives a most useful example of the destructive and constructive work of policy when he talks about the two contrasting chronotopes concerning state structures: 'the grey, slow bureaucracy and politically correct, committee, corridor grimness of the city hall welfare state as against the fast, adventurous, carefree, gung-ho, open-plan, computerized, individualism of choice, autonomous 'enterprises' and sudden opportunity' (41) of the new leaner structures. Ball concludes his account by emphasizing again both the global patterns and convergences of policy changes and the more local and national hybrid translations of these discourses, what Appadurai (1996) calls 'vernacular globalization'.

In the *Education Debate* (2008, 2013a), Ball argues that globalization is important in respect of policy in terms of the articulation of the problems that policy has to address and as the 'spatial frame within which policy discourses and policy formulation are now set' (25). What is interesting for us in terms of our argument is the strengthening of the section on globalization in the second edition of this book (Ball 2013a). Ball deals with World Bank, the OECD, the WTO and EU, as in the first edition, but adds some new insights and new literatures. For example, he makes mention of the work of the 'new philanthropists' and their role in policy communities and agenda setting for policy, matters taken up as an important

focus in *Global Education Inc*. When discussing the OECD, he makes the point that the current Coalition Government in the UK uses PISA comparative scores 'as points of reference and forms of legitimation for their policies' (40), especially as a way of implicitly criticizing previous polices of New Labour (Sellar and Lingard 2013). Regarding the EU, he makes new use of Lawn and Grek's (2012) arguments about the emergence of a new European policy space in education that functions through networks and meetings and constitutes Europe as a commensurate space of comparative measurement of performance in education and in respect of the goals of the *Lisbon Declaration*. Ball (2013a, 45) summarizes his position on the global, regional (EU) and the national in education policy:

> What we see here is an increasingly complex and increasingly significant set of global and regional influences, pressures and dynamics that impinge on and are embedded in national systems of educational policy making – processes of policy harmonization, convergence, transfer and borrowing, that are confronted by and enter into diverse local political and cultural histories. (45)

Ball takes up the global aspects of this observation in *Global Education Inc*, to which we now turn.

From *Education plc to Global Education Inc*: rescaling and edu-businesses

In *Education plc*, Ball (2007) focuses on the involvements of the private sector in public education, what he calls multiple privatizations.[2] He begins by contextualizing these against the emergence of the competition state as a replacement for the Keynesian National Welfare State pursued in different ways in the UK under Thatcher and New Labour.[3] We note that the context of the competition state is clearly global and we also note Ball's re-emphasis on the state to address what we might be seen as a weakness of the early policy cycle work. The competition state is now concerned to ensure the competitive advantage of those fractions of capital positioned within the borders of the nation-state within the global economy, producing a new structure and focus for the state. Here, we see what Ball describes as 'the state as commissioner and monitor of public services and broker of social and economic innovation, rather than deliverer or even owner and funder' (Ball (2007), 5). It is in this space that multiple privatizations have occurred as what he calls the Education Services Industry (ESI) increases its involvement across education sectors. This has resulted in some blurring across the public/private divide with the state now both a 'market maker' and 'broker' in respect of the ESI. Ball's concerns in *Education plc* include the heterogeneous flows and processes of globalization and he notes, drawing on Mahony, Menter, and Hextall (2004), that private interests have now become a component part of the 'policy creation community'. These matters are taken up and extended in *Global Education Inc* (2012a) and *Networks, New Governance and Education* (with Ball and Junemann 2012). The former provides a globalized account of the issues explored in *Education plc* – Ball (2012a, 1) sees it as a 'sequel' – while the latter extends his interests in new modes of governance inside the competition state. Both provide methodological steps forward.

Ball (2012a) describes *Global Education Inc* as a 'workbook' that attempts 'to develop a method of policy analysis fitted to the current context of global education policy' (xii). In the Foreword, he makes the point that what he is dealing with in the book, the empirical as it were, is time sensitive, indicative of the rapid change today in respect of policy making and of policy networks. He also notes how he is dealing with neo-liberalism and suggests his ambivalence about such developments in education, particularly in what Derrida describes as 'conditions of undecidability' (xii).[4] He notes how much of the data in this book has been

derived from web searches, a methodology he extends in *Networks, New Governance and Education* to 'network ethnography,' and draws attention to the almost ephemeral character of such data.

In the Foreword, Ball (2012a) suggests that *Global Education Inc* exemplifies a cosmopolitan policy sociology, which seeks to reject methodological nationalism. In this respect, Ball quotes Beck (2006, 72–73): 'Cosmopolitanization is a non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and particular, the similar and dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived, not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles'. We now see in Ball's work not only an intense gaze on the global, but also the recognition that this gaze demands new methodologies, new epistemologies and ontologies for doing policy research, while also acknowledging that the nation-state remains important, but that its state structures now work in different ways and in different relationships with the private sector and in scalar terms. This cosmopolitan disposition can also be seen in calls by scholars such as Appadurai (2001) and Connell (2007) to deparochialise our theories, epistemologies and research methodologies in the context of globalization. Appadurai (2001) provides a strong definition of the internationalization of higher education, which would acknowledge the possibility of theory being developed in the nations of the Global South, rather than these contexts simply being seen as sites of the empirical application of theory developed in the high status universities of the Global North. Connell (2007) also makes us very aware of the colonizing tendencies of theory developed in the metropolitan centres of the Global North and applied non-reflexively to empirical cases in the Global South.

Here, Ball is documenting both the rescaling of policy involving new relationships across sub-national, national, regional and global relationships, and the heavy involvement today of edu-businesses and philanthropic trusts in education policy agenda setting, development and implementation. So our methodologies for doing policy analysis need to take account of rescaling, the involvement of international organizations such as the OECD in the policy cycle, as well as the involvement of edu-businesses and philanthropic trusts in all aspects of the rescaled policy cycle. *Global Education Inc* outlines transnational policy advocacy networks, the new philanthropy in education and education as big business for profit. This involves a complex interweaving now of the public and private in the workings of the education state across the policy cycle. Ball notes on this point:

> In effect, to different extents in different countries, the private sector now occupies a range of roles and relationships within the state and educational state in particular, as sponsors and benefactors, as well as working as contractors, consultants, advisers, researchers, service providers and so on and both sponsoring innovations (by philanthropic actions) *and* selling policy solutions and services to the state, sometimes in related ways. (2012a, 112)

In Chapter 6, 'Education as big business,' Ball documents in detail the involvements of 'multinational edu-business' in education. This is a new and important topic for education policy research today with Ball setting the parameters for this area of study. For example, he documents the work of Pearson, 'the world's largest education company' (124) and notes that it is,

> a globalizing actor in a very real sense, through its publishing, assessment and qualifications systems, English language teaching and administration and management products. It is operating across all three educational 'message systems' – pedagogy, curriculum and assessment and joining these up, globally, across a range of media, within its products and business growth plan. (127)

This is very evident in the insertion of Pearson into the conduct and analysis of testing globally and nationally, central to the creation of a global education policy field (Lingard and Rawolle 2011) and, in the Australian context, central to the creation of a national education policy field in a federal political structure (Lingard 2010). In the domain of testing, Pearson is

working together with the OECD, having been commissioned to help develop PISA. Pearson's philanthropic arm is also involved in producing materials with the OECD about the lessons that can be learnt from international comparative performance on PISA. We also note the involvement of Pearson in the production of the *Learning Curve* (Economist Intelligence Unit 2012), a report that provides a meta-analysis utilizing OECD, IEA and national data to make policy recommendations for national school systems. In Australia, the significant involvements of the not for profit Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in all aspects of the policy cycle in education and the increasing profile of Pearson in the work of the education state are also notable.

Ball's research and theorizing have been important for understanding new private/public relationships in the new global policy cycle in education. While Ball is not explicit about a politics in response to these developments, for example the democratic deficit involved when global edu-businesses and international organizations set education agendas, it is incumbent upon us to reflect further on a necessary politics, as the global education landscape and the power relations that traverse it continue to evolve and flow. Ball (2012a, 90) implies thiswhen he notes, quoting Ong, the need to explore 'new spaces of entangled possibilities' (90).

Foucault, *Networks, New Governance and Education*

In *Networks, New Governance and Education*, Ball and Junemann (2012, 78) map the emergence of new policy networks and forms of network governance in education that span public/private boundaries. They briefly describe how public education in England has been 'modernized', from Thatcher to New Labour's Third Way and the Coalition's Big Society, through a 'complex series of small *moves*' (21) which have encouraged a range of new actors into schooling, including private companies, charities and religious organizations. This has seen the rise of new forms of network governance as New Public Management principles are imported from the private to the public sector. In a sense, network governance is part of the evolution of the state restructured under such principles and involves relationships between multiple partners, in which governments assume the role of facilitator, to address difficult policy problems 'through the 'informal authority' of diverse and flexible networks' (3). Ball and Junemann focus particularly on the relationships between, and the new influence of, individuals and organizations that span the boundaries between government, philanthropy and business (especially finance capital). The emergence of these new policy networks has led to 'the boundaries and spatial horizons and flows of influence and engagement around education … being stretched and reconfigured in a whole variety of ways' (25). In other words, 'the topology of policy is changed' (78) and Ball and Junemann trace this change through a series of network diagrams that can be patched and folded together to provide a spatial representation of the profusion of agencies now involved in education policy in England and beyond.

At the level of content, Ball and Junemann's (2012) analysis focuses on education reform and governance through new policy networks in England. However, the book provides an implicit, yet substantive documentation of the contemporary effects of globalization processes in education policy. The usage of network as 'a method, a technique for looking at, thinking about and representing the structure of policy communities and their social relationships' both reveals the thoroughly globalized nature of new policy communities and demonstrates the analytical power of a diagrammatic approach to policy sociology, particularly for analysing the spatiotemporalities of contemporary education policy that intersect multiple scales (e.g. local/national/global). Their network ethnography approach, developed from the work of Howard (2002), combines careful online tracing of relationships between individuals

and organizations with interviews to explore the nature of these relationships and draws out new transnational forms of sociality constituted from 'social relationships, subjectivities and identities, flows and movements in and beyond the nation-state' (12). These policy networks are woven from 'a kind of connective tissue that joins up and provides *some* durability to these distant and fleeting forms of social interaction' (12), but they are also contingent, experimental and exist in combination with 'older' forms of government and bureaucratic authority. Ultimately, network governance is defined by Ball and Junemann as a form of *heterarchy*: 'an organizational form somewhere between hierarchy and network that draws upon diverse horizontal and vertical links that permit different elements of the policy process to cooperate (and/or compete)' (138).

Of particular interest throughout *Networks, New Governance and Education* (Ball and Junemann 2012) is the spatial language used to characterize the structure and dynamics of networks and the diversity of the different things that are networked. The 'joining up' of 'finance capital with philanthropy, think-tanks and various bits of government and diverse politicians and political actors, across party divides, nationally and internationally' (85) is emphasized throughout. These joined up spaces are said to have a particular 'thickness' and 'density', and to involve 'hybridities, blurrings and crossings' (105). New forms of philanthropy, in which business sensibilities are brought to bear in charitable work, are being translated into educational programmes designed to address social disadvantage through enterprise curricula and the inculcation of entrepreneurial attitudes, 'blurring the boundaries between sectors and producing a convergence of methods, sensibilities, values and forms of organization' (114). Policy networks bring together and make continuous, in new spaces, diverse sets of people and organizations, private and public interests, feelings and calculations, economic value and social values.

We want to suggest that Ball and Junemann's (2012) illustration of the changed topology of policy, and their spatial approach to mapping this new policy topology, can be understood in the context of what Lury, Parisi, and Terranova (2012) argue is an 'epochal transformation in the intersection between the form and content of cultural expression', which they describe as the becoming topological of culture:

> [T]opology is now emergent in the practices of ordering, modelling, networking and mapping that co-constitute culture, technology and science. In short, a distributed, dynamic configuration of practices is organizing the forms of social life in ways that supplement and extend those of Euclidean geometry. (5)

We see Ball and Junemann mapping changing relationships between mobile policy actors in new policy spaces that are composed by these mutable relationships. From a topological perspective, Allen (2011, 284) observes, 'power relationships are not so much positioned in space or extended across it, as compose the spaces of which they are a part'.

Lury, Parisi, and Terranova (2012) discern a contemporary evolution of cultural expression paralleled by the emergence of new conceptual vocabularies in social and cultural theory, arguing that 'culture is becoming topological' at the same time as we are seeing an increase in the 'use of topology as a way of analysing culture' (6). We recognize that there are multiple fields of topology in mathematics and the application of the concept in cultural analysis is nascent and not unproblematic (Phillips 2013). However, this so-called 'topological turn' does suggest a convergence of multiple threads of contemporary social theory around a concern to understand 'topological cultural forms (or constantly changing deformations)' such as 'lists, models, networks, clouds, fractals, and flows' (Lury, Parisi, and Terranova 2012, 4). For example, Appadurai's (1990) concept of 'scapes', which he uses to describe multiple, intersecting global spaces across which flows of people, ideas, money, policy pass,

etc.,can be seen in terms of this topological perspective. We are wary of fashion in social theory, but see merit in adopting topological perspectives, not because they are in vogue, but because they provide a generative conceptual vocabulary that draws together a number of convergent trends in social theory concerning space and mobility, new data infrastructures and cultural globalization.

Ruppert (2012) provides an illustrative example of how 'topological analytics' can be applied. She examines New Labour's 'big data' analyses (see Mayer-Schonberger and Cukier 2013) and the joining-up of various databases in ways that constitute new populations and subjects, arguing that this produces new 'governmental topologies'. Ruppert draws here on Foucault's concept of dispositive and theoretical resources from actor-network theory to examine how new governmental and 'commercial, social and political practices involve the enacting of multiple forms of association and identification that are more variable, unstable and modulating than "older" forms of identity' (131). This is touched on by Ball (2013b, 124) too, in his most recent writing on Foucault and education.

One particularly interesting result of what we are characterizing as Ball and Junemann's (2012) incipiently topological approach is the attention it draws to new relationships between intimate social life and abstract economic calculations and rationalities, producing a 'mix of caring and calculation' (Ball and Junemann 2012, 52) in education policy and governance: 'new sensibilities of giving are based upon the increasing use of commercial and enterprise models of practice' (49), but also function as a new mode of governance in education. For example, trust and generosity, 'touching and talking', provide an important glue in networks that bring together corporate and other actors in educational organizations and programmes that aim to overcome 'disadvantage' and produce economic value with an entrepreneurial spirit and measurable efficiency. We can see here the relationships between sensual life and abstract rationalities that Lury, Parisi, and Terranova (2012, 28) argue are central to topological culture, in which 'the indices, meta-models, networks and experiments of topology are not detached from the material, from the body, language or the senses, but rather work in and through them … topological rationality participates in and renews the specificity of the material and the sensuous'.

As we have suggested, the topological direction suggested in Ball and Junemann's (2012) approach attends to the global even if the analytical focus appears to reside primarily at the level of the nation. Following Amin (2002), we would argue that the conceptual focus on networks and the methodological approaches of network ethnography and mapping enable social analysis to cut across scalar conceptions of space and place, such that the stretching and blurring of relations within policy networks in England can be seen as continuous with global transformations in education policy networks. Amin proposes a topological conception of globalization as:

> [A]n energized network space marked by, first, the intensification of mixture and connectivity as more and more things become interdependent (in associative links and exclusions); second, the combination of multiple spatialities of organization and praxis as action and belonging at a distance become possible; and third, the erosion of the ontological distinction between place and space as 'placement' in multiple geographies of belonging becomes possible. (395)

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) have argued a distinction between the space of global education policy discourses and the place of policy enactment in nations, systems and schools. Amin's account suggests, with the topologiocal turn, that this space/place distinction is elided to a considerable degree. Ball and Junemann are also concerned with this elision and the emergence of energized network spaces of this kind. Amin (2002) argues that 'the reconfiguration of the spatiality of social relations [is] a central aspect of contemporary globalization'

(389) and the policy networks mapped in *Networks, New Governance and Education* illustrate the ways in which new actors pursue 'placement' in multiple corporate, philanthropic and educational spaces. We suggest that this network-diagrammatic approach brings to policy sociology in education a new kind of topological analytics that intrinsically attends to global contexts and framings.

Conclusion

Ball's work clearly demonstrates the significance of the global today in education policy production, discourses and communities, as well as enactment if one considers the topological turn, and this recognition has strengthened across his *oeuvre*. His work in some ways can be seen as bringing together rescaled conceptions of the policy cycle with more topological constructions of the stretching and joining-up of education policy spaces globally. As we have shown above, the latter provides a theoretical background to his account with Junemann of network governance: the emergence of heterarchies, a mélange or dispositif of vertical and horizontal bureaucratic, market and network relationships. Paradoxically, as the economy has become globalized and national economic sovereignty somewhat weakened, nations have taken hold of education policy as a central policy lever in economic policy. Yet, as Ball's work demonstrates, such policy has also often been framed by global policy problems, discourses, and magical solutions, connected across global and national policy communities and public and private sector policy actors.

Policy work is no longer simply the work of governments, as Ball's research shows; rather, it is now net-worked in a range of public and private, formal and informal processes, in which the influence on policy of large data sets, international comparisons and concerns for national productivity must be thought of in connection with the role of informal conversations, trust, and philanthropic generosities. The intensification of calculative rationalities in policy is coupled with new affective intensities, what Ball and Junemann refer to as a mix of care and calculation. Grek (2013) has recently written about this importance of face-to-face meetings in the construction of policy networks and new policy spaces, in addition to the digitized nature of such networks. In his recent book on Foucault, Ball (2013b) suggests that 'the essential point about performativity is that we must make ourselves calculable rather than memorable' (136). In our view, though, the enhanced significance of performativity as a new governing technology in the restructured state is being accompanied by the enhanced value of memorability or reputation, especially in the 'touch and talk' network governance modes of policy production today. As Arvidsson (2012) observes, reputation is generally defined and measured 'as some combination of three measurements: the number of times that an object is mentioned; the network centrality (or influence) of the actors mentioning it; and the affective intensity (sentiment) with which they mention it' (52).

We began this paper with a consideration of Ball's policy trilogy from the 1990s and his outline of the policy cycle within education policy sociology, as both methodology and focus of policy analysis. We have now moved to an emergent, nascent, inchoate topological analytics in his later work. Ball has developed the concept of the policy cycle across his research, adding two subsequent contexts of second order effects in respect of policy outcomes, in terms of some conception of socially just policy, and then in terms of thinking about the significance of the global for the cycle. A topological analytics raises questions about policy sociology work today in education and provokes questions of how to reconceptualize the policy cycle. There are different connections of proximity and relation between contemporary policy contexts of influence, text production and practice. These contexts and the policy problems that populate them are worked on at various scales within the

global and by multiple actors. We also know that textually, policy constructs the problem to which it is a putative solution. As Ball (2013b) argues, for Foucault 'problematization is both an object of study and a method/a research disposition' (28), an approach that has application in policy sociology.

Rather than seeing the cycle fitting within an equilateral triangle consisting of fixed relationships between contexts, policy analysis underpinned by topological analytics presupposes 'the co-constitution of a space, problem and solution resulting in varying rather than fixed boundaries and a logic of abduction' (Ruppert 2012, 121). Such analytics work with a topological conception of the relationships between contexts of the cycle and in so doing make visible different aspects and relations of policy making. The topology of policy is changed by new empirical developments, that is, what is done nationally and globally, but also by the analytics brought to bear in analysing these developments. A policy sociology, utilizing topological analytics, would offer the possibility of theorizing ever-changing and polymorphous processes of policy production and practices, while sustaining attention on those agents and agencies that remain a durable presence in these processes, including nations and transnational actors like the OECD. Ball's work, as we have shown, offers fruitful possibilities for such a new policy sociology in education in the context of neo-liberal globalization. His work reminds us as well that globalization carries significant implications for research methodologies in the social sciences and specifically in relation to policy sociology in education, and we need to locate this work within a cosmopolitan sociology. Thus, we are suggesting that while Ball's early work, what we have called the policy sociology trilogy, laid the foundations for a policy sociology approach to education policy analysis, we have suggested that his recent work sets out the scaffolds for a new and necessary approach, given the ever-changing global spaces and globalized actors of policy production and practice. This later work has also laid the grounds for a methodology for policy sociology in the context of the changes he writes about, for example network ethnography and a cosmopolitan disposition.

Notes

1. While we focus on the books in Ball's later work, we are aware of multiple related journal articles that develop further some of the ideas described in these books, including: Ball and Exley (2010); Braun, Maguire, and Ball (2010); Maguire, Ball, and Braun (2010); Nambissan and Ball (2010); Ball et al. (2011); Ball et al. (2011a, 2011b); Ball and Junemann 2011; Braun, Ball, and Maguire 2011; Braun, Hoskins et al. (2011); Exley, Braun, and Ball (2011); Maguire et al. (2011); Ball (2012b, 2012c, 2012d); and Ball et al. (2012).
2. In *Education plc,* and much subsequent writing on the impact of globalization on education policy, Ball draws on the sociology of Bob Jessop, particularly Jessop's 'economic geography and political sociology' and his work on the changing character of the 'capitalist state' and globally oriented 'Schumpeterian Workforce State' that has replaced the 'Keynesian National Welfare State' (Ball 2007, 3). In *Global Education Inc,* Ball (2012a, 2)makes further use of Jessop's work, referring to the 'denationalization of the state' after Jessop, and making use of Jessop in relation to the new geographies of state power in global contexts.
3. Ball's analysis here is of Anglo-American systems that have pursued the path of neo-liberal reform. We note that there has been resistance to this in other parts of the globe, for example in Latin America, East Asia and Scandinavia, reflecting uneven and differentiated developments in global capitalism and of neo-liberal reform agendas.
4. In recent work on neo-liberalism, Ball draws on the critical geography of Peck and Tickell, who wrote of 'proto', 'roll-back' and 'roll-out' stages of the neoliberal agenda (3), and also the work of Ong, who distinguishes between big 'N' neo-liberalism to refer to changes in the global economy and new possibilities for profit and small 'n' neo-liberalism to refer to new modes of governmentality through self-capitalising individualism (3). In the Foucault book, Ball (2013b) also draws on Peck to argue that neo-liberalism is both in our heads and in the economy (128).

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