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**The Genealogy and Governance of
'A Curriculum for Excellence'.
A Case Study in Educational Policymaking
in Post-Devolution Scotland**

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MA (Hons) PGCE

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctorate in Education (EdD)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glasgow EdD. As someone with a professional background in education, government and parliament, and an academic background in politics and citizenship, I was keen to identify an area of study that might draw upon these areas of interest. The emergence of *A Curriculum for Excellence* as a major new policy initiative in the mid-2000s appeared to represent an ideal case study scenario for just such a study.

I wished to examine the ways in which this policy had been initiated, formulated, developed and implemented. In particular I was very aware of the optimistic and aspirational claims around new and improved modes of policymaking that had contributed to the discourse around devolution in the late 1990s. I wanted to test these claims in the light of the development of *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

In order to address these claims I developed a conceptual framework that placed a strong emphasis on themes of genealogy and governance. Through this framework, and a methodology based on literature review and in depth interviews with some key participants in the policy process, I hoped to scrutinise some aspects of the Scottish policy process that are rarely examined. These include the influential role of individuals and organisations, the ways in which policy is mediated in an apparent pursuit of consensus and the consequences of this approach to policy.

My core research questions were:

1. To what extent was the genealogy of *A Curriculum for Excellence* influenced and shaped by the post-devolutionary context?
2. Does an analysis of the governance of *A Curriculum for Excellence* provide evidence of a change in post-devolution policymaking in education?
3. What does the educational policymaking architecture look like in post-devolution Scotland?

In answering these questions I identified a number of key findings, including that the *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) development can be situated in a policy context that has been informed by the advent of devolution. It provides partial evidence of a change in the post devolution conduct of education policy, although some procedures for policy consultation should be reviewed and enhanced further, with a greater focus on deliberative forms of engagement at all stages in the policy process. Policy goals should be stated more clearly and in ways that can facilitate review and evaluation. Procedures should also be put in place to promote greater continuity of staff and institutions involved in the core development and delivery of major policy initiatives in Scottish education.

The policy architecture that has emerged in the post-devolution period is a hybrid model that has not resolved the longstanding tension between consensual, pluralistic and mediating instincts on the one hand; and centralised control and governance on the other. The informal and organic system of checks and balances in the Scottish policy landscape that had evolved in the pre-devolutionary era has to a large extent been retained. This has implications for the scope, speed and ambition of any policy development and implementation, as exemplified by CfE in this case study.

In order to improve the prospects for effective policy change in future, I recommend that the roles of the different organisations with responsibility for educational policymaking in Scotland should be reviewed and clarified. Furthermore the procedures for policymaking should be clarified, formalised and made more transparent in the same way as legislative procedures were reviewed as part of the devolution settlement.

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PREFACE

‘Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation.’¹

Alasdair Gray (1934-)

Gray’s exhortation above might be directed at many different audiences. The fact that it has been inscribed on the perimeter Wall of the Scottish Parliament complex in Edinburgh suggests that it has been appropriated as a reminder to our nation’s elected representatives to live up to the high expectations of the people. However the broader implication of his words is that we all have a responsibility as citizens of contemporary Scotland to contribute to the process of democratic, civic and cultural renewal.

Devolution in 1999 was a pivotal moment in the recent history of Scotland. As I will relate in this dissertation, it was also a pivotal moment in my personal and professional journey. Thirteen years later my intention is to offer a small, critical yet constructive contribution to the process of evaluating whether the Scottish nation is operating in better ways than in the past.

¹ © Canongate Press (paraphrased from Dennis Lee’s *Civil Elegies*. Toronto: Anansi, 1972)

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I am very grateful to the fifteen individuals who consented to be interviewed for this study. Their perspectives have been essential in unravelling the complex background to the emergence of A Curriculum for Excellence.

I would also like to record my thanks to the colleagues who supported me towards the completion of this dissertation. Prof Jim Conroy and Prof Ian Menter approved a brief but crucial period of study leave during which I was able to conduct the majority of my interviews and other data gathering. Prof Andy Furlong supported some additional freeing up of teaching time in the latter, crucial stages of completion, and Angela Jaap covered a number of classes and assessment duties at these pivotal moments.

Prof Michael Peters was instrumental in encouraging me to take on the forbidding prospect of part time study on the University of Glasgow EdD. More generally his insights helped to open my eyes to the bigger picture in education. My fellow EdD students provided mutual support and encouragement both online and on study weekends. A number of Faculty of Education (latterly School of Education) colleagues also acted as tutors during the taught phase of the EdD, and I am grateful for their insights.

My colleagues in the Education for Global Citizenship Unit were helpful at every stage. Jacqueline Jackson helped to arrange a number of key interviews as well as transcribing many of the recordings with typical accuracy and professionalism. Harry Blee provided both formal and informal support with his typical generosity of spirit and enthusiasm. Harry has been a tutor, mentor, colleague and friend for over twenty years, and a great deal of my personal and professional growth over that period can be attributed to his example, although he cannot be held responsible for any of my shortcomings.

Prof Bob Davis was an outstanding supervisor, providing the essential blend of encouragement, critical friendship and intellectual rigour. His commitment to this endeavour remained solid despite the increasing scope and demands of his

responsibilities within the Faculty, and latterly as the Head of the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. His insights and erudition provided a much-needed focus for my investigation.

My engagement with the EdD process was punctuated by the birth of my two children, Catriona and Calum, who added a certain distracting vitality to my home life during the period of study. They also provided an important sense of purpose and perspective given that their school education will be founded upon the principles and practices of A *Curriculum for Excellence*. By a serendipitous quirk my daughter Catriona entered primary one at the same time as CfE was officially 'launched' in August 2010. My son Calum will follow in her footsteps in due course.

Irrespective of any critical analysis of the process leading to CfE that emerges in this study, I remain optimistic that CfE has the potential to promote a pedagogy that will allow my children, and all their peers, to flourish. My mother Jean McGregor retired a number of years ago after a distinguished and honourable career in education in which she promoted the cause of additional support needs and pedagogy grounded in social justice and equality. Having rarely acknowledged this in person I wish to state here that I have always drawn inspiration from her example.

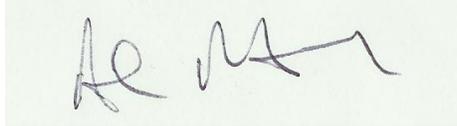
My wife Karen coped admirably and gracefully with the inevitable multi-tasking required when I was absorbed in this process, while also finding the time to complete her own Masters study. In the last year she has also had the additional burden of supporting my rehabilitation from major injuries I incurred in a rare moment of sporting relaxation.

I dedicate this submission with love and thanks to Karen, Catriona, Calum, Jean, and my sister Mhairi.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'A. D. Britton'.

Printed name Alan D. Britton

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY AND GLOSSARY

A Curriculum for Excellence: Various abbreviations are in use for *A Curriculum for Excellence*, including *ACfE* and *ACE*. However in this dissertation I will follow as far as possible the emerging convention in scholarly literature that abbreviates the term to **CfE**.

NDPB: This term stands for Non Departmental Public Body (also known as a quango). It signifies an arms-length, semi-autonomous organisation with a particular function, usually relating to a Government Department.

The Governance of *A Curriculum for Excellence*: Key Working Groups in the Policy Process 2004-2010

Ambassadors Group: Informal groupings bringing together wider selection of staff from the four Partnership organisations

Curriculum Review Group, or Review Group : The small working group established by the Scottish Government to review the Scottish curriculum in the light of the National Debate.

Engagement Team: A small team established under the auspices of Learning and Teaching Scotland with a focus on ways to involve practitioners and stakeholders in the CfE development process.

Management Board: Large group with broad representation from a range of stakeholders, with ongoing responsibility for strategic oversight of CfE developments. Minutes of their deliberations are available online.

Partners Meetings: Semi-formal gatherings of key middle/senior management staff from the 4 Partnership organisations.

Programme Board: The working group established to take forward the recommendations of the Curriculum Review Group, from 2004. Its role was taken over by the Management Board in 2008.

Subject Groups: The working groups that were established to oversee the development of curriculum principles and content under the headings of the eight subject areas.

Validation Group: a quality assurance (QA) body, drawn mainly from LTS and HMIE staff, which scrutinised the emerging Experiences and Outcomes from the Subject Groups.

Writing Groups: Subject focussed groups that developed the Experiences and Outcomes. Many participants were temporary secondees from teaching.

The Four Partners in the development of *A Curriculum for Excellence*

HMIE: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. Merged with LTS (below) in 2011 to form Education Scotland. Monitors aspects of school performance with an increasing emphasis on self-evaluation but continues to carry out inspections. Also main professional advisory body to Government.

LTS: Learning and Teaching Scotland. The national curriculum and educational technology development organisation (until 2011). Formed by a merger of the Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (SCCC) and the Scottish Council for Educational Technology (SCET) in 2000. Had a significant role in supporting the implementation of CfE.

Scottish Executive (from 1999-2007); **Scottish Government** (from 2007): the Executive branch of government in post-devolution Scotland, with departments led by Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries, supported by Civil Servants. Note change in nomenclature after the election of an SNP administration in 2007. Also, under the Scotland Act, the

Civil Service remains a UK wide institution. Civil service sometimes abbreviated in text to CS.

SQA: Scottish Qualifications Authority. The main examinations and qualifications authority. Formed in 1997 from a merger of the Scottish Examination Board and SCOTVEC.

Other Significant Institutions in the Scottish Policy Community

ADES: The Association of Directors of Education in Scotland. Brings together the Directors of Education from the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland.

CBI Scotland: Confederation of British Industry: increasingly influential employers' body. Represented on a number of the key governance structures relating to CfE.

Education, Culture and Sport Committee (ECSC): Cross-Party Scottish Parliament Committee with oversight of education policy and legislation, as well as the power to initiate enquiries and legislation.

EIS: Educational Institute of Scotland. The most influential professional association/'trade union' for teachers in Scotland.

GTCS: The General Teaching Council Scotland. 'Gatekeeper' of teachers' professional standards and status.

The Scottish Parliament: The main legislative body created by the Scotland Act/devolution. Sometimes referred to in the text as the Parliament.

SPTC: Scottish Parent Teachers Council; represents parents; has variable influence over policy.

TES or TESS: The Times Educational Supplement (Scotland): a weekly publication that has broad circulation among teachers and the education sector, and is the main public forum for information and debate around educational issues in Scotland.

Quoting from Interviews

Where I quote directly or paraphrase from an interview transcript in the main text, this will be denoted in square brackets with reference to the anonymous code that each interviewee is associated with. Where an excerpt from an interview dialogue is quoted, my side of the dialogue is labelled AB. Further details relating to these procedures are provided in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1: THEMES, GOALS AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

As the title suggests, this dissertation analyses the emergence of *A Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) as a case study in order to ‘...shed light on a phenomenon’ (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007: p.447). Troyna suggests that effective education policy studies ought to give:

‘...centre stage to social scientific interpretations of the antecedents, production and orientation of education policy’ (1994: p. 3).

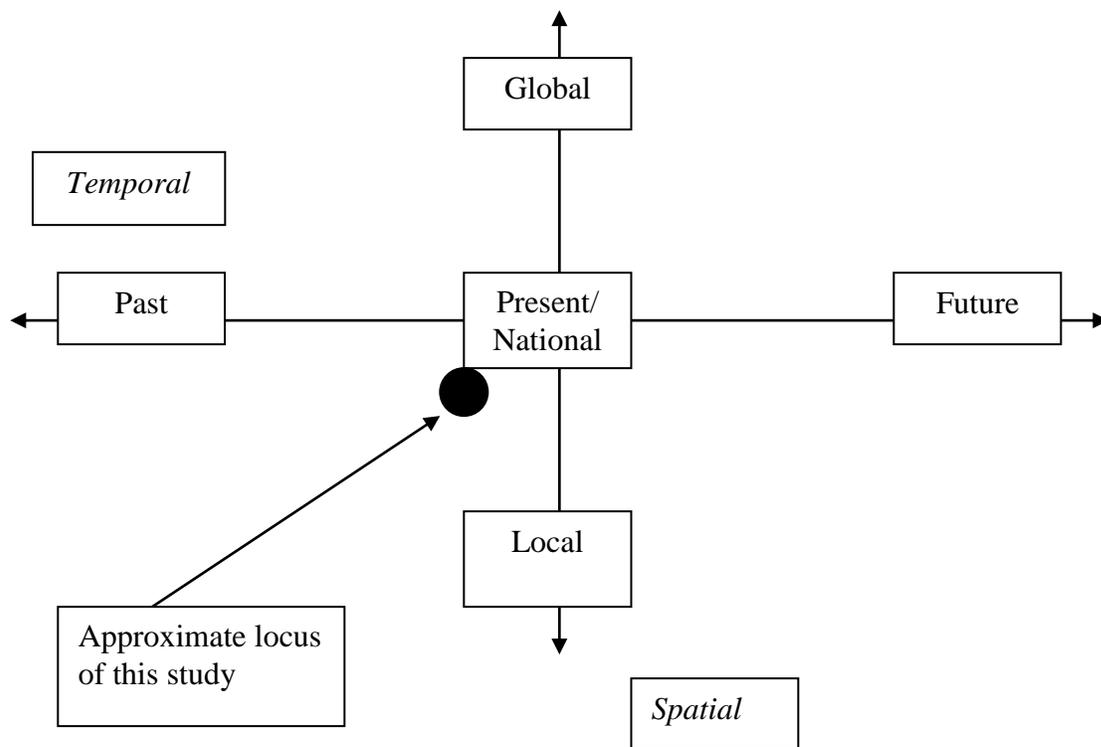
By exploring the policy process around CfE, with a focus on the particular constitutional, operational and institutional context and landscape that emerged from devolution in 1999, my goal was to contribute to a better understanding of the broader phenomenon of educational policymaking in contemporary Scotland. As well as seeking to understand CfE as a policy process, the professional dimension of the EdD implied that I ought to use this enhanced understanding to offer prescriptive recommendations for the future conduct of policy.

As I began to review the post-devolution context as well as the wider literature on educational policy analysis it seemed to me that there were a number of underlying issues that required scrutiny if one was to make sense of the CfE initiative. Increasingly I understood these as manifestations of sometimes occluded dynamics of continuity and change; and power and influence. In order to comprehend these emergent phenomena I drew on some of the literature from my principle academic field that seeks to describe the ‘multiple dimensions of citizenship’ (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 1999: pp.127-129).

In particular, the *temporal* and *spatial* dimensions that Parker *et. al.* saw as contributing to a fully realised conception of citizenship (alongside the *personal* and the *social*) seemed to offer considerable explanatory power in relation to a policy initiative such as CfE. Hicks (2001: p. 230) represented these dimensions in a diagram that I have adapted below (Figure 1), with the addition of an approximate locus for this study that situates it in the very recent past (*temporal* axis) and in a mainly national context (*spatial* axis).

Ball (2008: p.197) also endorses an approach that seeks to understand ‘the spatial and temporal reconfiguration of educational processes’. I felt that these two dimensions could contribute to a robust and persuasive analytical framework that addressed both *time* (the particular historic moment of devolution, as well as understanding this as a moment in a continuum) and *space* (the Scottish national policy landscape inhabited by certain key individuals and institutions).

Figure 1 The Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Policymaking



Adapted from Hicks (2001).

In policy analysis terms, this construction of temporal and spatial dimensions seemed to share affinities with, respectively, **genealogy** and **governance** as framing devices, and as my investigation proceeded I increasingly shifted the terminological and conceptual basis of my work in this direction. These two terms have therefore emerged as the pivotal

concepts that I deployed in developing my methodology, analysing the literature and my empirical data, structuring the dissertation and establishing the scope of my conclusions.

It is important to acknowledge that the conceptual scope and hermeneutic power of each term is so broad that it would have been perfectly possible to compose a full dissertation structured around either one of these themes on their own. However my approach has been to recognise the clear conceptual affinities between the two, and to use them to evaluate a relatively small number of particular facets of the CfE development.

The **genealogical** dimension, properly understood and deployed, contributes a vital criticality to the analysis of the development of CfE, and promotes a sceptical frame of mind that is willing to challenge official or normative accounts of its origins, for example where CfE is presented as deriving fundamental legitimacy from the 2002 National Debate on Education (SEED, 2004a: p. 3) (See Chapter Four Section 3). The everyday understanding of what is meant by genealogy might suggest a straightforward process of tracing origins and mapping connections. However in this study I deploy genealogy at least in part as a ‘hermeneutic of suspicion’ (Dunne, 2005: p. 371, referring to Foucault’s approach to genealogy): that is, a methodology that recognises how systems and sets of practices sometimes act to perpetuate power and privilege, and can mask ‘hierarchy, inequality and abuse’ (Dunne, 2005: op.cit.). Foucault himself defined genealogy as:

‘a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc...’ (in Rabinow, 1984: p.59).

In this study, for example, it became clear that some of the tensions and difficulties within the CfE process highlighted by interview respondents could be attributed to concerns around the unresolved distribution of power within the Scottish policy community (see Chapter Five Section 6). As Ball notes,

‘the physical [policy] text that pops through the school letterbox, or where ever, does not arrive ‘out of the blue’, it has an interpretational and representational history, neither does it enter a social or institutional vacuum’ (Ball, 2006: p.45).

The richness of the accounts afforded by the empirical work with policy participants helps to inform the detailed interpretational and representational history that is elaborated in Chapters Four and Five.

My stated interest in issues of continuity and change in the context of CfE also lend themselves to such genealogical analysis, relating as they do to the capacity of the wider educational system to manage transitions, as well as questions around where the responsibility for the management of change ought to reside. These considerations have a direct bearing on both my analysis of key transitions in the CfE process in Chapters Four and Five, as well as aspects of my conclusions and recommendations in Chapter Six.

Gale (2001: pp. 389-390) notes that policy genealogy assists in the examination of:

1. how policies change over time (...);
2. how the rationality and consensus of policy production might be problematised and;
3. how temporary alliances are formed and reformed around conflicting interests in the policy production process.

The first component (1) can be employed to map the evolution of particular policy themes and movements (see for example Ball, 2008, pp. 121-148 for a sequence of policy genealogies relating to major movements in English education under New Labour, such as *competition and contestability*, and *teacher modernisation and flexibilisation [sic]*). This approach will be apparent at a number of points in this dissertation (where for example I consider the evidence for politicisation in the CfE process, such as the emergence of literacy and numeracy in the CfE process [Chapter Five Section 4]). However my primary focus is not on the changes to the content of the CfE policy itself, except insofar as the process leading to the changes appears to be indicative of wider issues of power and governance.

This emphasis on policy process over content suggests that Gale's second and third goals of policy genealogy (2 & 3 above) are central to the aims of this study. The second is particularly salient in that the rhetoric of CfE emphasised the consensual and evidence-informed nature of the development (see Chapter Five, Section 5); and the third relates to the core structure for the institutionalised delivery of CfE being founded upon an institutional 'partnership' (SEED, 2004b: p9). Each of these themes contributed to the scope of my interviews and my analysis (see for example Chapter Five, Section 2 on the strategic partnership).

Genealogy acts as an analytical bridge to the other fundamental thread in this study relating to **governance**, especially if we accept Foucault's thesis that power is exercised within a set of practices or a profession both from the outside and from *within* (Dunne, 2005: p. 371). This implies that if we are able to interrogate the historical emergence and evolution of particular policy processes and practices in education with sufficient criticality we might uncover implicit 'regimes of power' (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984). The two concepts can also be linked by their common applicability to both the social and political domains; to the worlds of systems and human relations alike. Such dynamics emerge in the interviewees' varying accounts of how key policy formation groups were selected and convened (evident in Chapter Four in particular).

Governance itself can be understood as 'the way in which collective impacts are produced in a social system' (Hill & Hupe, 2002: p. 13); or as the recognition of the: 'contemporary public spaces and strategies for political action that do not necessarily involve national government' (Cremin and Faul, 2012: p. 163).

This latter formulation acknowledges that there may be a significant role for government (in the case of CfE, this role is clear both in the wider context of devolution and in the lead role of the Scottish Executive in the inception of the policy). However it also recognises that there are other significant and powerful forces at large in the policy arena. The wider backdrop to this shift seems to be the 'decentring of governance' (Dahlström, Peters & Pierre, 2011: p.4), driven by parallel processes of decentralisation and

devolution. Both movements are notably present in the UK and Scottish contexts in particular. Ball (2009), identifies a related ‘governance turn’ in policy scholarship; that is, a reinvigorated appraisal by the academic community of the underpinning dynamics that inform and shape policymaking. Ball describes a context where there is:

‘...a new terrain of government – complex and sometimes convoluted – which involves problems of coordination and accountability and transparency, to which there are new solutions emerging’ (Ball, 2009: p.537).

This new landscape, at least as it can be understood in the Scottish context, represents the spatial dimension in this study, and the empirical data draws upon the perspectives of some of the key individuals who inhabit it.

This study is therefore an attempt to make sense of a major educational policy initiative through a critical examination of its location within a context. The scale of this undertaking required a methodical yet discerning and selective approach and the sequential goals of the investigation unfolded as follows:

1. I selected *A Curriculum for Excellence* as the primary focus on my study.
2. I developed and applied a conceptual model that would allow me to address the two key themes of genealogy and governance, and adapted and applied a number of typologies of policymaking.
3. I developed a set of three core questions relating to the genealogy, governance and architecture of educational policymaking.
4. I critically assessed the evidence that high expectations had been set around the anticipated impact of devolution on educational policymaking in Scotland.
5. I interviewed some of the core participants in the CfE policy process and analysed their responses seeking further insight from their perspectives, with a particular focus on issues of governance. Their accounts of the process also informed my understanding of the genealogy of the policy.

6. I synthesised the evidence that emerged from the relevant literature and the interviews in order to present some conclusions and recommendations about the conduct of educational policymaking in the post-devolution context in Scotland.

Broadly speaking these goals are reflected in the overall structure of this dissertation: the remainder of this introductory chapter summarises the context for the study, as well as explaining and justifying my choice of topic. I set the parameters and state the core research questions, and end the chapter by explaining the professional relevance of this area of study for me.

In Chapter Two I begin to frame the study in greater detail. I draw upon relevant literature in the field of educational policy research in order to establish the critical architecture that I use to evaluate the different dimensions to CfE under investigation. In particular, I set out some of the established models of policymaking that will provide a typology with which to characterise CfE. Chapter Three provides an overview of the key methodological considerations and choices made in the development of the dissertation. There is an extended description of the research interviews as these were pivotal to my data collection.

Chapters Four and Five address both the genealogical and governance dimensions to the study, drawing on literature and from the perspectives of the policy actors interviewed for this study. I have divided the chronology of CfE into two stages: the first period from 1999-2004 (covered in Chapter Four) from which the vision for CfE emerged; and the second period from 2004-2010 (in Chapter Five) that might be termed the implementation phase.

In Chapter Six I review the core research questions to consider some of the overarching issues around the governance and architecture of Scottish educational policy in the post-devolution era. The material in this Chapter is informed to a considerable degree by an analysis of the findings from the interviews with key policy participants.

In Chapter Seven I draw together my conclusions and present a number of recommendations for the future conduct of policy together with some final thoughts reflecting the personal and professional implications of having undertaken this study while the story of CfE continued to unfold.

CHAPTER 1 SECTION 2: CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE DISSERTATION

Scotland has over the past dozen years or so undergone the most significant transformation in her constitutional status in three centuries. This involved a historic transfer of legislative powers and functions from the UK Government to Scotland in 1999. It was also anticipated that this would represent an opportunity for democratic renewal, and a revitalised and enhanced political culture within Scotland (Crick & Millar, 1995; CSG, 1998; Mitchell, 1999; Brown, 2000; Lynch, 2001). In the Preface I presented an epigram by the writer and artist Alistair Gray which has been inscribed on the exterior wall of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. It captures this sense of a broad ‘entrenched optimism’ (Paterson, 2000a) around devolution. Moreover there was a specific view ‘that a parliament could make better policy for education’ (Paterson, 2000a: p.1).

Both of the objectives - constitutional and qualitative – of the transformation begun in 1999 remain at least partially unresolved at the time of writing. A decade after the first election to the devolved Scottish Parliament saw the publication of the Calman Commission’s Report (Calman, 2009) into the possible extension of further devolved powers to the Parliament, and the SNP Government’s White Paper on arrangements for a referendum on independence. The fourth election to the Scottish Parliament in 2011 returned a majority SNP government with a commitment to a referendum on full independence. This referendum seems likely to take place at some point in 2014. Irrespective of the outcome, the trajectory initiated by Calman towards enhanced powers for the Parliament will almost certainly continue.

Recent history therefore supports the widely held view that devolution ought to be regarded as a *process* rather than an *event* (see for example Arnott and Menter, 2007: p. 254). Given the fluidity of this process it is perhaps unsurprising that the question around a qualitative change in policy-making culture and practice also remains more opaque than might have been expected by this stage in the post-devolution era. This study is intended to contribute some evidence of the extent to which the early aspirations around devolution have been fulfilled.

In the period since devolution, there have been a number of major education policy initiatives in Scotland that might make valid and worthy subjects of study by which to evaluate policymaking. After a period of reflection and reading I decided that the prominent status, and the scope of ambition, of *A Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) made it a logical choice as an obvious microcosm of policy enactment. It is arguably the single most significant educational policy reform in the period since 1999, and was certainly presented as such. It has been suggested that the CfE Review Group document (SEED 2004a) and the Ministerial Response (SEED 2004b) together epitomise:

‘...the emergence of post-devolution policy-making in education’ (Hart & Tuck, 2007: p.123).

The selection of CfE was not without its challenges. In the first place the sheer scale of the initiative was rather daunting. Secondly I also had to confront the reality of taking on what is in effect an ongoing and ever-changing issue. It might have been more straightforward with hindsight to have chosen a topic that addressed my broad ‘political science’ interest but that was more static or inert in nature, such as the place of the Parliament’s Education Committee in Scottish education. Instead having committed to this investigation, I have subsequently witnessed the evolution of the wider public and professional perception of the CfE initiative. Where in the mid-2000s it appeared to be relatively non-controversial and carried the mark of a broad consensus (which is a recurring thread in this dissertation), in recent years it has increasingly been subject to criticism, professional discomfort and (perhaps) professional resistance [see Epilogue for more detail].

Despite this change in perception my fundamental motive remains the same. I wish to understand CfE as a phenomenon of a particular time and place, rather than concentrating on what may or may not have ‘gone wrong’ in the process (although it may be that future research and enquiries by others will take this line). I provide a brief sketch at the start of Chapter Six that provides some thoughts on what might constitute ‘policy failure’ although I quite deliberately do not apply this directly to my findings.

Another dimension that I have largely sidelined in this study is the international context. Having conducted this research it became apparent that international and global factors certainly contributed to the process around CfE. The original vision in the Review Group Report recognised that the proposals were at least in part a response to deeper currents of globalisation and economic change, and the social, political and educational challenges that have emerged as a result (SEED, 2004a: p.7; p.10). The Report acknowledged the role of ‘international comparisons’ in shaping the CfE vision (p.7). There is also some related evidence of what might be termed ‘policy transfer’ (Stone, 2000) around CfE where some individuals from the key Partner organisations visited other countries seen as being at the forefront of curriculum innovation as part of their preparatory work for CfE developments [interview with L].

In my interview schedule I also asked the respondents about the possible external drivers for the CfE vision. The observations that emerged certainly merit further consideration, but unfortunately they lay outwith the final scope of this dissertation, and the focus will remain primarily on the Scottish context. In the next section I will say more about what could and could not be included in the completed dissertation.

CHAPTER 1 SECTION 3: SETTING THE PARAMETERS AND DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

August 2010 was the official ‘start date’ for CfE, six years after the publication of the original review document and eight years after the National Debate. The account presented here takes cognisance of the broader sweep of educational history in Scotland, but it is mainly concerned with the period running up to devolution in 1999, the initial post-devolution period (including the National Debate in 2002), the Review Group Report in 2004, then the period from 2004 to August 2010 (which might be termed the *implementation phase* for CfE, although a number of interview respondents did not like this terminology [interviewees B, C, L]). One interview clarified the reasons for this dislike of the term:

‘because that has set people into thinking about a traditional model of implementation, “Where is the package? I will introduce this when I have had my staff development as of August 2009 or whatever.” And the model that was very much part of CfE which was about allowing people to take their own decisions, trial their own bids, make small changes here and bigger changes there, that language has gone from the discussion and I feel that is a major loss’ [B].

As I suggested previously, the obvious downside to choosing such a topical concern is that CfE remains ‘unfinished business’ at the time of writing. I have disciplined myself in the ultimate stages of writing up the dissertation to desist from searching for new literature or news coverage relating to the developments. Such material is certainly available and of potential relevance, however with one or two essential exceptions I have had to draw a line in the sand and set these sources aside for later study or publications.

Another realistic prospect is that after submission, it may be that some aspects of my analysis are rendered obsolete in the light of subsequent events and decisions. Indeed one of the first recommendations that took shape in the light of my preliminary analysis was that the role of LTS in policy development ought to be reviewed and clarified. Events

have since overtaken this proposal with the merger of LTS and HMIE into Education Scotland in 2011.

I am therefore keenly alert to the ongoing nature of the policy process; the goal of the study is therefore to describe how the process unfolded up to August 2010 and to set a conceptual and analytical benchmark based on that period that might serve as a resource for any future study of CfE, either by me or others.

Within the time frame described above there are significant transition points in the CfE process that merit especially close scrutiny. In the genealogical hermeneutic, transitions are potentially very revealing, contributing to a 'discourse of endings' (Ball, 2008: p.193), in which one set of circumstances is replaced by another. I will focus on the transition represented by devolution itself; followed by the important policy transitions from the National Debate of 2002 to the establishment of the Curriculum Review Group and the ensuing Report (2004). Another important transition in the process was the establishment of the Programme Board (2004-2007) that inherited the responsibility for implementation. The primary source of information around these critical transitions comes from some of those who were intimately involved at these points. These transitions are covered in some depth in Chapters Four and Five respectively.

The development of my core research questions has been an organic and contingent process. It took on these characteristics due to a number of factors: including the rapidly evolving policy context described above that required a reactive approach to events; the extent to which I was uncertain exactly how my interviewees would respond in general and specific terms to my initial questions; and my own growing appreciation of the phenomena as the study unfolded. I also went through the process familiar to most doctoral students of narrowing my focus from a broad range of initial questions to a more manageable and realistic set of core questions.

My starting point in distilling the core questions was my decision to use genealogy and governance as the two overarching themes, based on my understanding of the temporal

and spatial dimensions of policy. Thereafter I looked at the implications of these themes in the light of the models of policymaking and policy research described in Chapter 2. These models provided a visually and conceptually straightforward device by which to summarise and interpret the undoubtedly complex (and sometimes conflicting) evidence that emerged from the actual interviews with key policy informants. I should emphasise that the research interviews themselves [the full interview question schedule is provided in the Appendices] were constructed and conducted at a point when my conceptual understanding was still being formed. There was a complex feedback loop between the interview questions which were only partially grounded in my understanding at the time, the responses I received, and the detailed analysis that led back to an enhanced conceptual appreciation. If I were to conduct the actual interviews now, some of my questions might be different.

The core research questions listed below are in effect a distillation of what was originally a much more extensive set of questions that were initially aligned closely with the interview schedule. In order to rationalise and simplify the overall structure of the dissertation, and to reduce the overall content to an acceptable level, I condensed this larger group into a small number of concise overarching questions that in effect shape this study.

My core research questions were:

1. Does an analysis of the governance of *A Curriculum for Excellence* provide evidence of a change in post-devolution policymaking in education?
2. To what extent was the genealogy of *A Curriculum for Excellence* influenced and shaped by the post-devolutionary context?
3. What does the educational policymaking architecture look like in post-devolution Scotland?

The challenge was to provide a meaningful, robust and relevant analytical framework with which to answer these core questions. I therefore developed a number of secondary framing questions that are addressed primarily in Chapters Two and Three:

- Which conceptual model(s) might help to frame my case study approach?
- How might education policy research contribute to my understanding of the present context in Scotland?
- Is there a typology of policymaking that can be applied to CfE?

In order to examine the genealogical and contextual dimensions I structured my analysis around two distinct phases in the CfE process: the first relating to the period from 1997-2004 (covered principally in Chapter Four); and the second phase in the development between 2004 and 2010 (analysed in Chapter Five). The analysis of these stages in the genealogy of CfE is structured around a number of secondary questions:

- What was the chronology of the key events relating to CfE?
- What was the political and constitutional context from which CfE emerged?
- How was it anticipated that the nature of educational policymaking might change as a consequence of devolution?
- What role and impact did the National Debate and the Curriculum Review have in the CfE process?
- How was the transition from the vision laid out in the Review Group Report to the implementation phase managed?
- What was the role of the four Partner organisations in implementation?

Chapter Six presents a synthesis of my analysis of the governance and policy architecture of CfE, in order to review the extent to which the process met with the devolutionary aspirations towards different and better forms of policymaking. Chapter Seven presents some concluding remarks and the recommendations that arise from my findings.

Given the scale and scope of the CfE reforms, a number of additional or alternative areas for study presented themselves in the preliminary stages of my investigation, such as the actual content of the new curriculum. I might have explored the extent to which CfE represents a ‘message system’ (Bernstein, 1973: p. 363) tied to explicit or implicit ideological or socio-political-economic drivers, whether national or global. Indeed I asked a question related to this terrain in all of my interviews. However as is often the case, such a potentially rich seam for further exploration has had to be largely excised from the evidence in this submission, although I did draw on elements of my respondents’ answers to this question where it impacted more directly on issues of policy genealogy.

As I will suggest in the next section, to some extent there is already a fairly robust literature and ongoing debate around the question of curriculum content in the context of CfE, as well as the professional readiness, willingness and capacity of teachers in Scotland to respond to the changes. The originality in the vision presented here derives primarily from my attempt to uncover the rarely exposed dynamics of a major policy process, as related by the participants in that process. I hope that, as well as fulfilling the requirements of the EdD, this contribution to the ongoing debate about *A Curriculum for Excellence* might ultimately reach a wider audience, including academics with an interest in education policymaking more generally, political scientists with an interest in post-devolution Scotland, and in the micro-levels of policymaking. I also hope that the spirit and content of my conclusions and recommendations might reach policymakers who will shape similar developments in future.

CHAPTER 1 SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE AND ORIGINALITY OF THE DISSERTATION

One of the features of a professional doctorate such as the EdD which distinguishes it from a PhD is the emphasis on *experience* (Murray, 2002). My personal and professional interest in this field can be traced most directly back to my experience as a participant in the advent of the new Scottish Parliament.

In what proved to be a critical juncture in my professional journey I was appointed in January 1999 to the post of Education Officer for the Parliament. I took up this post having come from a secondary teaching career (with subject responsibilities in French and Modern Studies). This appointment entailed in the first instance a short period working as a civil servant within the former Scottish Office as a member of the Constitution Group tasked with enacting aspects of the Scotland Act 1998 and contributing to the functional establishment of the Scottish Parliament itself. This was followed by a formal transfer to the employ of the Parliament upon its formal creation in May 1999, where I continued in post within the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) until September 2001. My main tasks were to establish an Education Service for the Parliament, and to act as a liaison point between the Parliament and the other key education-related policy and practice institutions in Scotland.

I found myself working with Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), Parliamentary officials, Scottish Executive Ministers and Civil Servants, as well as representatives of civic society and educational interest groups. I also visited a number of other Parliaments in an official capacity, including the Swedish, Flemish and European Parliaments, as well as spending a week on placement at the Palace of Westminster. Such experiences provided me with a privileged insight into the underlying culture of a range of institutions engaged in policymaking in Scotland and elsewhere, and exposed me to some policy mechanisms that varied from effective and efficient to convoluted, idiosyncratic and occasionally bewildering. While relatively brief, this period of employment within the apparatus of government provided perspectives on the policy process that were not apparent to me in my previous employment as a classroom teacher. As McPherson and

Raab (1988: p. ix) note in a colourful image, ‘the machinery of government grinds more than thin air’, and being a former cog in this machine has certainly assisted in framing this dissertation.

My understanding of the Scottish policy process has also been shaped by direct participation in some aspects of recent policy developments, including membership of Reference and Ministerial Working Groups on *Education for Citizenship* and *One Planet Schools*, and being commissioned to draft a policy document, *The Global Dimension in the Curriculum* (LTS, 2007). In some respects I have become a minor participant in the web of Scottish ‘policy communities’ (Humes, 2003: p.83). In my daily professional life I also have to respond to CfE, through the impact on teacher education courses that have had to evolve in response to a new curriculum framework, and the continuing professional development (CPD) sessions that I run for teachers who are trying to respond to CfE and related initiatives. The publication of the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education (Donaldson, 2010) is a further example of the interface between policy development and the implications for my professional practice.

One of Humes’ recurring criticisms is that the more one is involved in the policy apparatus, the more one may be implicated in the operations of the ‘leadership class’ itself (Humes, 1986). I hope that despite my growing professional engagement with policy I demonstrate the criticality of the disinterested observer in this study.

I also hope that this work provides a fresh and original perspective in the field of Scottish policy studies. I will note later that there has been a historic paucity of detailed policy research in Scotland (with a few notable exceptions such as the work of Humes, and McPherson & Raab). More recently others have provided some very helpful overviews of the post-devolution policy landscape in general (for example, Hassan & Warhurst, 2002; Keating, 2005), and education in particular (Allan, 2003; Donn, 2003; Bryce & Humes, 2003 and 2008; Arnott & Menter, 2007; and the recent work of Priestley in particular).

McPherson & Raab (1988: p. 494) conceded that in both their own work and that of Humes (1986) there was little ‘direct evidence on policy-makers beliefs and intentions’. The nature of this study, and the empirical evidence from the interviews, constitute at least an attempt to remedy this in a small way by adding to the relatively limited volume of empirical research around CfE. As Priestley noted, albeit in 2008, it was puzzling that ‘there has been so little academic debate about the proposed curriculum and its model for implementation’ (Priestley: 2008: p.2). Since he made this observation the number of more analytical critiques has gradually increased (not least through his own work with Humes in 2010, and Minty in 2012). These recent perspectives tend to focus on the detail (or lack of it) in the content of the CfE proposals with less emphasis on the questions of process I focus on here. Other research has highlighted such aspects of CfE as the apparent implicit challenge to the primacy of secondary subjects, most notably History (Hillis, 2007); or Gillies (2006) who provided a critical account of the emergence of the CfE Values of ‘Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity’ taken from the Mace of the Scottish Parliament. I will refer to a number of these and other relevant studies at the appropriate points later in my analysis.

One aspect of this study that I hope will prove especially revelatory is the extended observations on the role of the civil service in the Scottish educational policy process. Of the four organisations that constituted the strategic partnership charged with the delivery of CfE, the workings of the Government and Civil Service are probably the least familiar, certainly to teaching practitioners. Yet they remain hugely important to the process.

I recognise that my professional obligations do not cease at the point of submission of this dissertation; I hope to develop the findings further in future and disseminate my conclusions and recommendations in the appropriate arenas. The interview transcripts also represent a considerable resource for some further areas of investigation that I have had to set aside at this point. In Chapter Two I will set out the broader conceptual framework that underpins my work presented here. This framework also guided me in determining which aspects of the policy analysis that I undertook ought to be retained or discarded for the purposes of this submission.

CHAPTER TWO: FRAMING THE STUDY

SECTION 1: EDUCATIONAL POLICY RESEARCH AND THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

As I indicated in Chapter One, this investigation addresses aspects of the conduct of a specific policy (CfE), from a specific national context (Scotland) and at a particular moment in time (the period after devolution). Having established these spatial and temporal parameters my next step was to develop an intellectual framework that would help me to retain the ‘real world’ applicability and professional relevance of my study while providing sufficient conceptual and analytical rigour.

My review of the field of educational policy research and analysis yielded a number of insights that provided reassurance and clarity in how I might proceed. Dale (quoted in Ozga, 2000: p39) argues that ‘the primary concern [of policy analysis]...is to find ways of ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of social policies...irrespective of their content’. Hogwood and Gunn (1984: p263) suggest that policy analysis is:

‘...primarily about determining the characteristics of the issue being analysed and the organisational and political setting of the issue, with the actual mechanics of particular techniques being secondary and consequential’.

Grace suggests that effective policy scholarship demands an approach that acknowledges the social, cultural and historic settings (and conflicts) in which policy is developed and implemented (Grace, 1998). Perspectives such as these resonated with, and reassured me of, my intention to separate process from substance in relation to CfE, and to place significant emphasis on context.

Ball distinguishes between *policy* oriented and *practice* oriented research. In pursuit of the former, he suggests that such a study ought to be:

- Temporal rather than atemporal;
- Global/local rather than National/general;
- Context rich rather than context barren (adapted from Ball, 2006: p16).

Of the three features, I have sought to address the first and the third in this study, while consciously marginalising the global perspective as explained in Chapter One Section 3. Indeed Ball's third feature will tend to dictate the choice, and demand flexibility of choice, within the second feature.

The potential epistemological and methodological limitations of policy analysis have been highlighted by Tooley and Darby (1998: pp. 29-32) who suggest that partisanship can intrude on *educational* research into what are essentially *political* reforms. They highlight the importance of reporting on what the evidence shows, rather than on what the researcher wants to find. This is perhaps reflective of their wider scepticism around qualitative research and preference for quantitative research (Ozga, 2000: pp. 90-93). The intrusion of ideological bias is a natural possibility in relation to policy analysis; indeed some policy analysts and educational researchers are entirely comfortable with explicit 'partisanship' in their work. They see their role as critical researchers who are willing to take sides, to challenge what they perceive to be inequity or injustice and to uncover alternative 'truths' that are hidden by prevailing orthodoxies (e.g. Scraton, 2004: pp. 189-192). I am wary however of some of the rigidly defined or 'pure' research paradigms (Tooley and Darby, 1998: pp. 38-40) that might drive such research.

While it is essential to acknowledge such potential pitfalls of policy analysis, it remains an obvious heuristic with which to unpick a complex phenomenon such as CfE. Ball (2006) advocates the application of multiple theoretical perspectives within policy research. In order to translate my aims into a robust analysis I had to select from the vast intellectual marketplace of such perspectives and traditions. Such choices are naturally open to influence from personal ideology or allegiance to a particular epistemological or methodological stance. However my own epistemic stance remains somewhat non-aligned, tending towards the pragmatic, the fallibilist, and with aspirations to positivism, but aware of the limitations to all of these. I followed the guidance in Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: p.30) in relation to a pragmatic approach:

‘Study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system’.

To take one example, I might have conducted a systematic analysis of CfE by deploying discourse analysis (see for example Fairclough, 1995), a technique used by some researchers to uncover phenomena relating to power that are expressed and reinforced through language. Such an approach dissects ‘policy as text’ (Ball, 2006: pp.44-48), searching for subliminal (or even subconscious) meaning and bias, or embedded markers of ideology and power (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984: pp.56-57). It also suggests that official policy discourses may become self-fulfilling by normalising modes of understanding and action that exclude alternatives. Humes utilises the term ‘narrative privilege’ to encapsulate his view of how those in control of the policy process can frame and therefore dominate the discourse (Humes, 2009). Ozga (2000: pp.94-95) suggests that what constitutes a ‘policy text’ can be interpreted quite broadly by the researcher. Applying such a technique to the particular policy documentation around CfE might well have yielded some interesting findings however it carries a high degree of risk of subjective and unwarranted interpretation, arguably more so than the main strategy I in fact pursued around interviews.

In the event my approach has been driven primarily by pragmatism; the interviews were both an epistemologically legitimate source of mainly qualitative data, and a realistic and practical possibility given my range of contacts within the policy community. However as I will highlight in the final section of this Chapter, I remained alert to the need for integrity around the pursuit and interpretation of my data. Grix (in Morris, 2009) suggests that while particular methodologies themselves are neutral,

‘in practice different methods yield different sorts of data and allow different kinds of interpretation’ (Morris, 2009: p. 211).

Applying this caution to interviews suggests that there may be a temptation to quote from the more sensational or controversial statements from interviewees, while ignoring

equally valid yet stylistically banal observations. I exercised my own judgement as far as possible, as well as a systematic approach to coding, to mitigate against this, but I must concede that in some instances some of the direct quotes are incorporated because of their forthrightness.

The other consideration that informed my approach was to identify a methodology that was fit for the specific purposes of an EdD. In this sense the study ought to involve what Schon (1995: p.27) describes as the ‘scholarship of application’ which uses knowledge to address problems of professional consequence to both individuals and institutions. In other words, my findings ought to be conceptually rigorous, but not so esoteric as to be of limited value in a professional capacity.

In elaborating my methodology I also sought to understand how and whether my undertaking would be consistent with the traditions of policy research in the Scottish context. It has been noted that there tends to be a correlation between the volume of educational policy research activity and the contested nature of particular educational changes at any particular point in time (see for example Parkinson, 1982). This might explain the long fallow period in policy research in the United Kingdom during the period of post-war political consensus. The tenor of the debate changed in the 1970s (and the volume of research correspondingly increased) both as a result of the Ruskin College Speech of James Callaghan in 1976, and the election of a Conservative Government in 1979 under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. The former stimulated debate by questioning the efficacy of existing curriculum, teaching and learning in a changing global context, and the apparent complacency of the teaching profession (Shain and Gleeson, 1999: p. 447); while the latter ushered in a period where educational policy became characterised by ‘reform technologies’ (Ball, 2008: pp. 41-53) of increased control, performativity and market.

These changes were reflected in a growth in critical ‘policy scholarship’ (Grace, 1998) However, much of this research activity related in the main to the English educational system, as it was most immediately affected by the ideological shift. A similar dynamic

appears to be unfolding in England at the present time in response to the radical changes to education policy under Michael Gove (see for example *Forum*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 2012).

The Scottish educational system, and the nature of policy research therein, seemed to be a case apart. A combination of administrative devolution and the complex array of mediating networks and processes that underlay it, mitigated against the brunt of the radical changes emanating from England (Arnott & Menter, 2007) [another pattern that currently appears to be repeating itself]. In turn, the volume of educational policy research in Scotland was less than in England (even taking into account the issue of proportionality) according to Raab (1994). The main characteristic of Scottish educational policy research was ‘that there is not much of it’ (McPherson & Raab, 1988: p.53). Mackenzie (1994: p.8) further suggested that:

‘for too long the study of the culture, history and administration of Scottish education remained anodyne descriptive and blandly uncritical’.

This tone of research might in part be attributed to the rather insular nature of the system, and if Humes is to be believed, might also relate to the apparent career rewards for compliance and commensurate punishments for heterodoxy (Humes, 1986). He has more recently provided a personal account of an incident in which he was told by a senior member of HMIE that he ought to be ‘careful about criticising the inspectorate in public’ (Humes, 2009). While this is clearly anecdotal, if his account is accurate it suggests that there remains a culture of defensiveness within some areas of the Scottish policy community. A further reflection of the ‘small world’ nature of Scottish education is that a number of senior figures who might in other circumstances have fulfilled their role as public intellectuals by scrutinising a policy initiative such as CfE were instead co-opted into the development process itself, including Brian Boyd, Pamela Munn, David Raffe, and Keir Bloomer. Interestingly, Boyd and Bloomer in particular have gone on to express in public concern around the subsequent evolution of the policy (see for example the Commission on School Reform, 2012 online).

The historic Scottish education policy research environment therefore appears to be characterised by the same distinctiveness displayed by the Scottish educational system itself. This uniqueness can be traced to its origins in the Reformation (Mackintosh, 1962; Bell & Grant, 1977; Humes, 1986; Anderson, 2008). It is one of the cultural pillars upon which significant elements of Scottish identity and prestige have been founded (Anderson, 2008: p.205). To many it draws heavily on the intellectual heritage of the Scottish Enlightenment (Herman, 2001: p26; Peters, 2003, p1038) and embodies the ideal of the “democratic intellect” (Davie, 1961), fostered by a pedagogical breadth and depth that is reflective of, and a driver of, egalitarian and meritocratic national instincts (Devine, 1999: pp389-390).

The somewhat idealistic formulation of these intellectual traditions reinforces the almost mythological view of Scottish education that has been critiqued by more recent observers (for example Chitty, 2004: p110; Ozga & Lingard, 2007). Humes (1986: p204) described the widespread ‘reluctance to face the truth about Scottish education’, and the notion of a shaping ‘myth’ is highlighted by Humes and Bryce (2008: p99) as a key factor in cultivating ongoing collective attitudes towards Scottish education.

If one puts to one side for the time being the argument about the extent of mythologizing and romanticism, it seems fair nonetheless to assert the authentic distinctiveness of Scottish education. In historical terms this uniqueness dates at least from the advocacy of public education by Knox in the 16th Century (Kerr, 1910: p196; Devine, 1999: pp390-391). It is noteworthy that the fight to maintain a separate system has at times been intertwined with the wider political and constitutional backdrop, so that its initial survival was guaranteed through concessions secured within the Act of Union of 1707 which merged the Parliaments of Scotland with England and Wales, creating the United Kingdom. Some also argue that Davie’s ‘Democratic Intellect’ influenced a ‘revival of educational nationalism...this reinforced the view that there should be no attempt in Scotland to follow English patterns [of Education policy] where this was avoidable’ (Bell & Grant, 1977: p.99). From this perspective education was at the same time a symbol of distinctiveness and a driver in itself of the impulses towards further autonomy.

The separateness of the Scottish system was maintained throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries, supported by the gradual process of ‘administrative devolution’ which saw the establishment of a number of state institutions to support and govern the semi-autonomous aspects of Scottish civic life, including Law and Education. The Scottish Office as the ‘local’ branch of the UK Government had a significant degree of administrative autonomy. Education in this period seems to fit into the wider pattern of semi-autonomous governance that led Kellas (1975) to identify the existence of a de facto Scottish ‘political system’ that existed apart from, yet connected to, the constitutional reality of Westminster-based governance.

The 19th and 20th Centuries also witnessed the emergence of a range of stakeholder bodies, such as the EIS (whose Charter was established in 1851), Her Majesty’s Inspectors (1850 saw the first appointment of an Inspector) and the GTC (1965), which gradually built a matrix of organisations with varying degrees of power and influence over Scottish education. Despite these developments and the degree of Scottish autonomy in relation to educational policymaking (Mackintosh, 1962; Hunter, 1971; Anderson, 2008), the mood for more far-reaching change towards authentic self-rule was increasingly asserting itself, not only within education but across the full spectrum of civic and political life.

From the early 1970s through the 1980s, and up to the mid-1990s, the pressure within both the political system and the wider public for more profound constitutional change gained significant momentum. In the meantime, some dissenting voices were beginning to challenge the apparent overly positive portrayal of the educational system. Humes presented what he himself described as the first ‘full frontal attack’ (1986: p6) on the ‘received wisdom’ that Scottish education was not only *different* but *superior* to English education (Humes, 1986: p.5). He presented a critique of Scottish educational institutions and policymaking that asserted that, contrary to popular beliefs around pluralism, the system was in fact highly centralised, and control was exercised through often hidden processes of patronage that tended to reward compliance. A small number of key institutions and actors (including civil servants, inspectors, curriculum developers and

professional associations) tended to set the parameters of educational discourse, and controlled the review, development and conduct of policy in Scotland.

In Humes' view, even the conduct of educational research was implicated in the system he described (Humes, 1986: ch. 8). It lacked autonomy and independence due to the implicit parameters set by potential funders, who tended to belong to the policy community circle themselves. Humes sought to shake the system out of what he perceived to be a complacency or wilful blindness around the exercise of power and control.

Some contemporary reviewers claimed that Humes' analysis was dominated by documentary analysis at the expense of direct and empirical observation (Bone, 1987; Hartley, 1988), and that it lacked an engagement with the wider analytical literature on policy making (Hartley, 1988). One reviewer (who self-identified as a member of the policy elite that Humes was critiquing) suggested that Humes tended to focus on case studies that illustrated failures in the system, ignoring the fact that in many cases the system appeared to function quite well (Bone, 1987).

Humes was certainly not the first critical account of the Scottish system. Previous descriptions had also noted the dangers associated with dissent in a relatively closed system, Bell & Grant (1977, p.92) suggesting that:

‘the smaller size of the country means that the leading figures at the centre have a far greater personal knowledge of individual Scottish authorities and schools and thus the consequence of even petty defiance can be all the greater’.

McPherson & Raab used the term ‘policy community’ to describe the people and groups within government and other outside interests that are ‘directly involved in the making and implementation of policy (1988: p. 472). They recognised that the policy community could be viewed in a negative light as an indicator of a corporatist approach to policy, or more favourably as evidence of a diverse and pluralist approach to policymaking. Their concern was that the policy community in Scotland had tended to act in a self-

reproducing cycle by incorporating only those whose values and attitudes were in accordance with the more powerful elements within the governing structures. This analysis seemed to reinforce some aspects of Humes' vision of the 'leadership class'.

These insights remain pertinent in the present context, and will help to shape both my conclusions on the CfE process and my recommendations. In the next section I will present a typology of policymaking models that will also play a significant role in my final observations.

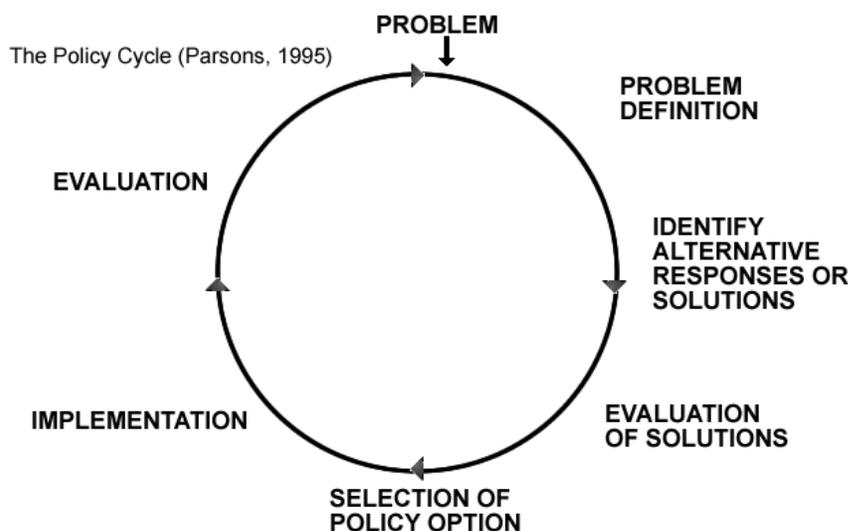
CHAPTER 2 SECTION 2: A TYPOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICYMAKING

This brief section presents a series of models that I identified during my review of the policy literature. I have selected those that I felt might best help me to understand CfE as a policy process and lead me towards some conclusions about what CfE might reveal about post-devolution policymaking in Scotland. I have selected examples that help to illustrate three broad categories of policymaking models: the *ideal*, the *descriptive* and the *prescriptive* (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984: p.43).

An ideal model, as the name suggests, is one which might not reflect a realistic vision of how policy is actually made, but that shows how truly rational policymaking might be conducted. In other words it removes all the uncertainty and unpredictability of human behaviour. Figure 2 below provides an example of an ideal model, in which the process proceeds logically and systematically, with embedded reflection. This is the kind of rational model to which policymakers might well aspire, by encapsulating the notion that policy can be viewed:

‘instrumentally, as a form of goal-directed behavior designed to achieve predetermined ends’ (Pinar et.al., 1995: p.666).

Figure 2 An Ideal Model of Policymaking: The Policy Cycle (Parsons, 1995)



Descriptive models are intended to be more realistic and reflective of the ‘real world’ and the actual complexity and messiness of policy in practice (what Lindblom [1959] referred to as ‘muddling through’). They might also reflect and anticipate the various limitations: behavioural, financial, institutional and so on, that will tend to impede a more rational model (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984: p.50).

A prescriptive model will emerge where the intention is to indicate how policies ought to be made. It might acknowledge, but seek to minimise, the complexity emerging in descriptive models; to maximise the rationality of policy; and to learn from policy failures. In certain respects, my recommendations at the end of this dissertation will contribute towards a prescriptive model for Scottish educational policymaking in future.

Figure 3 below provides two different models (developed by Lindblom and presented in Stoker, 2006), both of which can be interpreted as descriptive and/or prescriptive approaches to policymaking, depending on one’s goals, values and ideology. The first model (a) pertains to a centralised and hierarchical decision-making context. This might be a descriptive representation of an autocratic or dictatorial approach if that is the actual political or organisational context. Equally it could be seen as a benign and rational approach if applied to a context in which the decision-makers at the top of the structure have democratic legitimacy and perhaps, are able to be held accountable.

The second model in the diagram (b) reflects a much more complex and organic landscape in which decision-making is filtered through various stakeholders and positions of authority, leading to mediation, adjustment, negotiation and compromise. Pinar *et.al.* (1995: p.666) also recognise this process of ‘political negotiation among various constituencies’. At first sight, this model seems to represent a rather accurate depiction of the way that policy tends to be constructed in Scotland; I will return to this observation in my conclusions.

Figure 4 below presents two ‘ideal’ models: the rational and the collaborative (Raffe & Spours, 2007: p.9), alongside a descriptive mode (politicised). Raffe and Spours suggest

that on balance, the collaborative model appears to be preferable as a prescriptive form (*op.cit.*, p.11) although there may also be valid features to draw from the rationalist strand, and there may be disadvantages to some aspects of the collaborative model. They regard the politicised strand as a quasi- ideal model, and as a ‘distortion of the rational model’ that they associate in practice with recent New Labour educational policymaking (*op.cit.*, p.12). Raffe and Spours developed this typology with a view to examining the extent of *policy learning* in the wider policy process. They defined policy learning as:

‘the ability of governments, or systems of governance, to inform policy development by drawing lessons from available evidence and experience’ (Raffe & Spours, 2007: p. 1).

While policy learning is not a significant theme in this study (See Hart & Tuck, 2007 for an exploration of policy learning in the Scottish context) the clarity of this schematic is such that I have applied it (with minor adaptations) in Chapter Six in an attempt to present a clearer understanding of the nature of the CfE process in a post-devolution context.

Figure 3 Two Descriptive Models of Policy Development (adapted from Stoker, G. 2006: p. 79).

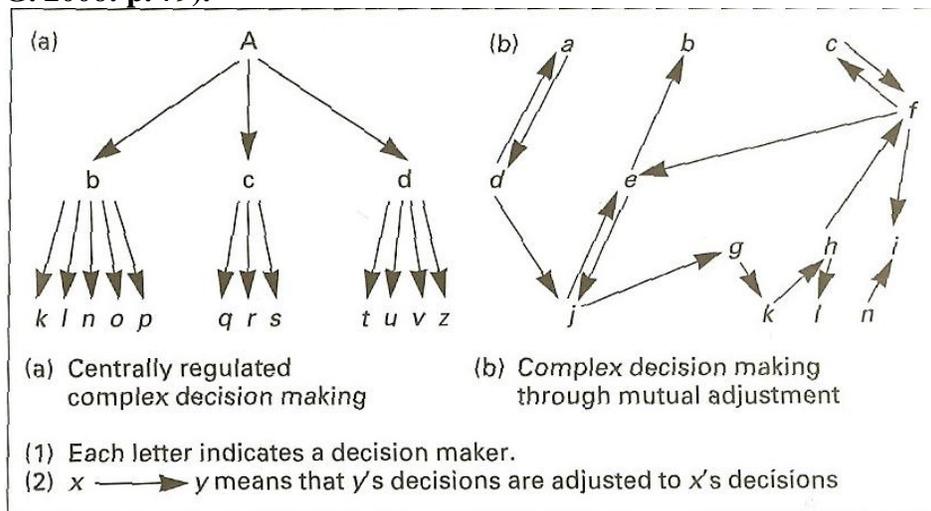


Figure 4.1 How government works

Source: Adapted from Charles Lindblom, *The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making through Mutual Adjustment* (New York: Free Press, 1965).

Figure 4 Three Models of the Policy Process and Policy Learning (Raffe and Spours, 2007: p.7)

Table 1.1 Three models of the policy process and policy learning

	Rationalist	Collaborative	Politicised
1. Relation of political contestation to policy learning	Separate (concerned respectively with goal-setting and choice of policy options)	Integrated, complementary	Political calculation dominates the policy process causing conflicts and confusions
2. Model of governance	Hierarchical, centralised Policy-making separate from implementation	Collaborative, network-based, decentralised Policy-making close to implementation	Hierarchical, centralised and personalised Political ideology infuses policy-making and implementation
3. Decision-making process	Procedurally rational Distinct stages: e.g. selection of policy goals, choice of policy options; implementation Policy learning informs choice and development of policy options	Deliberative and reflective Stages overlap: political (goals) and technical (options) decisions interconnected; policy development continues in implementation Policy learning informs all stages	Non-rational with tendency for political interventions in policy cycle Stages therefore overlap Policy learning used to legitimise, to gain support for and to implement prior decisions
4. Types of knowledge	'What works' Explicit, declarative, Mode 1 Universalistic; transferable (under discoverable conditions) across time, place and policy fields	Diverse and contested types of knowledge Tacit, procedural, Mode 2, embedded in networks Contextualised; transfer problematic	Diverse types of knowledge politically selected Political learning, legitimating Transferability of ideological paradigm assumed
5. Learning from elsewhere	Used to identify best practice	Used to enhance understanding	Used to legitimate chosen policy
6. Information flows	Knowledge transfer Feedback follows implementation Information gathering through accountability and control mechanisms: vertical information flows	Knowledge exchange Continuous feedback Multiple sources and flows of information: horizontal information flows	Knowledge selection Selective feedback Information gathering through accountability and control mechanisms: vertical information flows Restricted information flows between insiders and outsiders
7. Policy learning relationships	Strongest within policy community; formal relationships with researchers; little continuous practitioner involvement	Developed relationships within policy community and with (and among) practitioners and both established and new research communities	Strong distinction between political insiders and outsiders; extensive use of private research consultants

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

SECTION 1: LITERATURE SEARCH

Having situated this study in a professional context, and set out my conceptual framework, in this Chapter I describe the procedures I pursued in relation to the two main strategies for data collection, namely a literature review and interviews with key participants in the policy community and process around CfE. Given the centrality of these interviews to my investigation I provide a detailed account of the processes of data collection and analysis. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of the principal ethical considerations that emerged as a result of the methodologies employed.

In addition to the literature search and the interviews, there were a number of other possible approaches that I considered and then discarded for a variety of reasons. For example at one stage earlier in the process I planned to conduct a focus group composed of key informants and external commentators. This might have been a rich source of seminar-like dialogue and discussion, although I realised that such rich material might be compromised and restricted by issues of anonymity and attribution (although Chatham House rules would have applied), and might not have met my requirements more generally.

Another possibility was to take a more quantitative approach through, for example, the use of an in depth, anonymised questionnaire to be sent to all Review Group and Programme Board members. Depending on the return rate this might have yielded rich data that might have been easier to code and systematically analyse than the semi-structured interviews I actually conducted. However issues of time and capacity meant that I rejected this strategy. Moreover, I recognised that in the context of this study, questionnaires are arguably more effective at *describing* than *explaining* particular phenomena (Munn & Drever, 1995: pp5-6). However I have undertaken a small scale quantitative approach to some of the data from the interviews where this was possible; I will describe the process for this in the next section.

The process of literature review in the context of an EdD is generally regarded as differing from the equivalent phase in a PhD; my Supervisor suggesting to me that an EdD dissertation ought to be 'literature aware' rather than incorporating a distinct section of literature review. This awareness of relevant literature permeates the study, as well as having informed many of the choices I made around the topic, themes and methodology.

With regard to the domains of relevant literature, a prominent analyst of educational policy has highlighted the general failure of *educational* research to engage with the *political*, and vice versa. He noted that

'political scientists have eschewed education as a substantive field or sector, whether on a descriptive level or as a terrain on which to develop or adapt theories of power, conflict, consensus, ideology or other political or governmental phenomena' (Raab, 1994, p19.).

He also suggested that political scientists had only recently 'considered policy-implementation'. I sought to redress this lack of interdisciplinary engagement by drawing on literature that encompasses political science perspectives.

The actual process of literature search began with a review of my personal archive of material from my time in the Scottish Parliament, in order to re-acquaint myself with the intellectual and indeed emotional backdrop to devolution as I had experienced it firsthand. This led me to such documents as the CSG Report (1999) and the National Debate material I had retained from my role as a coordinator of the University of Glasgow Faculty of Education's submission to the Debate. These and related documents helped to reconstruct aspects of the optimism and sense of engagement in the period around and immediately after devolution.

Thereafter I pursued a more structured and formal approach to searching, using obvious key words and databases through the University's library with a particular emphasis on scholarly journals. I was also able to make use of my own substantial library of

publications relating to Scottish government and politics. Other valuable resources were the TESS online archives, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament's web sites and the Official Report of Chamber and Committee proceedings in Parliament. While not all of these sources are referred to directly in this dissertation, they nonetheless helped me to understand the wider picture. The key areas of literature that I reviewed were:

- History of Scottish Education (policy)
- Education Policy Analysis
- Research Methodology
- Curriculum Reform and Change Management
- Scottish Politics and Devolution
- A Curriculum for Excellence

This broad and interdisciplinary sweep allowed for the synthesis of political and educational perspectives that I sought for this study. I will now describe the sometimes challenging procedural and ethical issues I had to address in gathering my empirical data.

CHAPTER THREE

SECTION 2: INTERVIEW PROCEDURES AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The empirical evidence that forms the core of this study is drawn from fifteen interviews with key informants who (with one exception) have been integral in some way to the development of CfE. Of the fourteen interviewees with direct involvement in the process, nine were representatives of one of the core partner organisations (HMIE, LTS, Scottish Government, or SQA). The others participated in the process either as representatives of other organisations or as ‘private individuals’. Twelve of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Three were recorded in note form only at the request of participants. I also took notes in the audio-recorded interviews as a form of back up.

The process of identifying and approaching interviewees was partly systematic, partly pragmatic and also reflective of the nature of the small policy community in Scotland. I had a goal in mind at the outset not necessarily to achieve full coverage of all participants in the process, but at least to interview a meaningful sample. I was conscious of the need for a balance of perspectives, and I also set myself a target of interviewing at least five members of the Curriculum Review Group, as this appeared to me to be the critical inception point in the entire CfE process. In some instances I was able to approach individuals close to the CfE process whom I knew in a professional capacity. They in turn were able to recommend additional contacts to interview. I then cast the net somewhat wider to include individuals whose participation intersected in some way with other milestones in the genealogy of CfE, including the National Debate and the Programme Board. I was also able to interview individuals involved in the development of the detailed ‘Outcomes and Experiences’ (SEED, 2006: p12).

The rationale for this general approach of targeting those who had been prominent in developments is that such individuals are likely to have:

‘special knowledge or perceptions that would not otherwise be available to the researcher...[they] often have more knowledge, better communication skills, or

different perspectives than other members of the defined population' (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007: p. 243).

Some of the interviewees might be characterised as members of a policy elite, understood to be 'those with a close proximity to power' (Lilleker 2003: p. 207). I was aware from the outset that policy- related research, especially with such senior policy staff, is inherently 'sensitive', for some of the reasons described in Cohen, Mannion & Morrison (2007: pp.119-132)) including:

- the potential consequences to individual respondents, their careers or their institutions.
- the fact that the interviewees may not have welcomed the research, or found it undesirable to have scrutiny placed on their participation in the policy process.

Such sensitivity can often create barriers and limitations to research, including issues around access and 'gatekeeping' (Fitz & Halpin, 1994: p.40; cited in Cohen et al, 2007: p. 128). However as I note elsewhere, I was largely successful in gaining access to relevant individuals, which may be a function of the Scottish system. Another possibility is that those in more powerful positions are in fact relaxed and secure; that

'their power in the educational world is echoed in the interview situation, and interviews pose little threat to their own positions' (Walford, 1994, p.225; cited in Cohen et al, p128).

The final composition of the interviewee group was a compromise between the pressures of my time and resources, the non-availability of some of the individuals approached, and the desire for representativeness. In straightforward numerical terms I interviewed just under 40% of the Review Group, and 50% of the Programme Board members. However such figures do not guarantee an authentic representation of all the different views and perspectives of the quite diverse range of stakeholders (including parents, practitioners and employers' organisations) who were engaged in the policy process at various points. It is important to acknowledge the restrictions this might place on the confidence of some of my assertions and conclusions, as well as suggesting the desirability of further more

comprehensive data gathering in future with this group. One additional perspective that I would be keen to pursue in future would be that of the incumbent elected officials (Ministers and senior MSPs) in order to investigate their take on events and processes around CfE.

My preparation for the interviews was crucial, as it was important for me to present myself as someone both familiar with the CfE development in general, and equally cognisant of the institutional dynamics that I was hoping to uncover in the course of the interviews. This preparation manifested itself in the semi-structured nature of the interviews, with clear primary questions as well as the flexibility to improvise follow-up questions. Such preparation is endorsed by McHugh who emphasises:

‘the need for meticulous preparation for an interview with a powerful person, to understand the full picture and to be as fully informed as the interviewee...’(McHugh, 1994, cited in Cohen et al, 2007: p. 129).

I also sought to establish my credentials in more formal ways through my Plain Language Statement on the research and the written invitation to participate; and in informal ways at the outset of the interviews. For example with civil servants I mentioned that I had previously worked within the Scottish Executive and the Parliament. In a sense, I was able to ‘speak the same language’, which is sometimes characterised as a ‘distinctive civil service voice’ (Fitz and Halpin, cited in Cohen et al, 2007: p. 128).

As the interviews progressed my understanding of some aspects of the policy process were progressively enhanced. I was thus able to cross-reference my knowledge drawn from earlier interviews, while maintaining the non-attributed nature of such insights. The transcripts of the later interviews demonstrate the growing depth of my understanding. I increasingly felt that I was becoming immersed in an unanticipated quasi-ethnographic or ‘microethnographic’ approach (Gall, Gall & Borg: p. 348) in the sense that some interviews revealed the lived experiences of involvement in the policy process and my growing engagement with that process. This perception also derived from my prior personal and professional experience within government that reduced the possible

‘otherness’ of the institutional terrain I was exploring; and it was reflected in a growing understanding that might be understood in classically ethnographic terms of ‘specific cultural situations’ (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009: p.17). I would not wish to overstate this dimension to the methodology, especially as I did not set out with this in mind; however it does suggest that there might be value in pursuing such a strategy in greater depth at some point in the future.

In retrospect, I would like to have pressed some interviewees further on some of the core themes that were emerging as the interviews accumulated. In an ideal world I would like to have revisited some of the interviewees prior to drawing up my conclusions, not because of suspicions around dishonesty, simply that further detail would have been beneficial to my final deliberations.

There are of course limitations in relying solely on the sometimes imperfect recall of a small group of (by their very nature) interested participants with a professional and reputational stake in a particular sequence of events and decisions. One prominent war historian maintains that he never relies ‘upon unsupported oral testimony to make a case on a matter of substance’ while equally conceding that ‘it is wrong to suppose that written evidence possesses an intrinsic reliability absent in oral testimony’ (Hastings, 2004: pp.598-599).

I have submitted the full transcripts of the interviews on a USB Pen Drive with the soft bound copies of this dissertation, as the printed versions of the transcripts would run to several hundred pages. This material provides verbatim accounts of the conduct of the interviews that were recorded, and they provide evidence of my commitment to impose a uniformity and balance of questioning where possible as well as responding to interesting responses with secondary questions and further discussion. It should be noted that the transcripts themselves have not been anonymised and are therefore ethically sensitive documents.

The normal University of Glasgow ethics procedures were followed, requiring submission of a detailed Ethics Application Form requiring scrutiny by an academic panel. In developing the methodology and research questions I had anticipated that the main potentially problematic areas would be around issues of interviewee consent and anonymity. I was also conscious of the need to ensure a balance between the breadth of coverage of interviewees to obtain a rounded account of events (for the reasons outlined above), with the limitations of time and resources that would prevent the possibility of interviewing every member of the relevant policy development bodies such as the Curriculum Review Group and its successors.

The detailed research questions for the interviews were redrafted several times and were shared and discussed with my supervisor. Potential interviewees were in most cases first approached via an email communication which included a background paper on the research. Consent was then sought for interview and definitive arrangements were made via administrative staff. As indicated earlier in this Chapter I was able to speak informally to some possible interviewees before they received this formal communication. This might be considered questionable from an ethics point of view, in that I was professionally (and sometimes personally) acquainted with a number of interviewees. However it was clear that these interviews would be conducted with the same rigour and on the same basis as any others, and in no case was I involved in what might be termed a 'dependent relationship' with any interviewee. It may be that I received more open and frank accounts from these individuals, however the interview evidence itself suggests that there were no significant divergences in accounts of key events and processes whether the interviewee was known to me or not.

I was conscious both in framing my detailed questions and in pursuing certain lines of enquiry within the semi-structured interviews themselves of erring on the side of caution; I had identified the likely most controversial themes and had drawn a line about how far I would pursue these.

All interviewees consented to have the discussion recorded electronically via a digital Dictaphone, with three exceptions. In one interview, two senior representatives of the same organisation were interviewed together (at their request, as a matter of logistical convenience) but asked that only a written note of proceedings be taken. In another interview the interviewee requested that only a written note be taken, and was initially keen to offer an overall narrative rather than responding to specific questions, however in the event the dialogue that emerged proved to be generally satisfactory in addressing most of the same ground as my standard semi-structured questions.

In both of these instances I was alert to both the spirit and the letter of an ethical approach to the undertaking, and responsive to the preferences of the interview subjects, although the data is inevitably less rich than fully transcribed interviews might have been.

The issue of anonymity/non-attribution remains a key concern, and I have been at great pains to maintain this principle in presenting these findings. In doing so, I have had to make some sacrifices, both stylistic and in terms of some of the material I have selected from the interview transcripts. For example, certain quotations would arguably carry greater authority and import if I could attribute them directly to a particular senior post holder or key individual. However this would clearly be a breach of anonymity and as a result some quotations are only ascribed to the role of a representative of one of the four key CfE Partners: the Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority or Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education; or as one of the other categories of policy participant. On a limited number of occasions I may ascribe a quote to a particular function, e.g. Civil Servant, or to an 'insider' [which indicates a representative of one of the four Partner Organisations in CfE] where this is essential to my argument, while avoiding the potential for attribution by inference. In these instances I avoid using the interviewee code.

Pring (2000: p.145) captures the essence of some of the dilemmas described above, noting the "often irreconcilable" principles of on the one hand, "respect for the dignity

and confidentiality of those who are the ‘objects’ of research” and on the other, “the principle which reflects the purpose of the research, namely, the pursuit of truth.” Such considerations lead perhaps inevitably to some degree of compromise, although it is my belief that this has not led to anything intentionally misleading or inaccurate.

Looking back on the interviews my sense is that most respondents were candid as far as they could be and sought to answer all my questions as fully and openly as possible. Only two interviewees requested that notes only should be taken, rather than having the interview recorded in full. One of these two interviewees also sought to lead the conversation in a general narrative direction, and I had to be somewhat assertive in returning the dialogue to my relatively ‘standard’ set of questions without which the endeavour to elaborate a comparative account of key policy actors’ experiences would have been difficult to sustain.

Another dynamic that became apparent to me in the course of the interviews was that on some occasions the interviews themselves perhaps contributed to the ongoing knowledge production and narrative of the CfE developments; my own emerging analysis that I relayed to interviewees, as well as the simple act of framing the questions, sometimes helped them to clarify their understanding of the process they had participated in.

To some extent I consciously self-regulated by seeking to avoid certain lines of direct questioning around the most controversial elements of the process that might have placed some of the interviewees in a difficult situation. Thanks to aspects of my prior professional experience I was alert to certain areas of discussion that Government and other officials might tend to find undesirable, as well as the more contentious aspects of the development, I sought to tread a delicate line that would avoid controversy whilst still facilitating candour and accurate analysis.

I was also alert to the possible intrusion of my own biases, which could have been manifested at any point in the process from the choice of general and specific topic of study, the constriction of the core research questions, the interview questions, the conduct

of the interviews and my interpretation of the data that emerged. I have at all stages tried to present a fair and accurate account of this information. In reviewing this study it is clear however that the selection of quotes displays a slight imbalance of views. This ought to be interpreted not as a deliberate attempt to skew the overall picture; rather it reflects the very different rhetorical styles of interviewees, some of whom were more adept than others in conveying their thoughts in especially vivid turns of phrase.

CHAPTER THREE

SECTION 3: ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING THE INTERVIEW DATA

A number of possible methodological approaches presented themselves in undertaking the analysis of the completed interviews. Systematic interpretational analysis was one possible route, in which the transcripts would have been coded, categorised and cross-matched with the support of relevant qualitative software. However I felt that the semi-structured mode of the interview questions limited the utility of this approach. Having reviewed all the transcripts I therefore blended aspects of systematic analysis together with a *reflective analysis* approach that:

‘...relies primarily on intuition and judgement in order to portray or evaluate the phenomenon being studied’ (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007: p. 472).

As well as the application of my own judgement the more structured component of the analysis involved segmenting the key questions and answers from the different interview transcripts which were then compared and interpreted. In this process I was looking for:

‘patterns, themes, categories and regularities’ (Cohen et al, 2007: p.461).

I had set out to interview a manageable number of respondents who I approached with the goal of obtaining a balance of perspectives (with the possibility of unearthing competing, or at least inconsistent accounts of the process as viewed from the different participants). Given the limitations and imprecision of such personal accounts the final analysis and interpretation attributed to the interviews inevitably remains somewhat tentative, as I agree with Ball who notes that the:

‘...purposes and intentions of political actors are important but they do not provide a sufficient basis for the interpretation of policies and policymaking’ (Ball, 1994: p.108)

Another limitation of the analysis emerged from the fact that in terms of the policymaking process, I was not always comparing like with like in the sense that different interviewees were engaged most closely with different key phases in the

chronology. A practical example of this was that, where I asked all respondents what they thought was the most effective and least effective aspect of the process, inevitably some commented on aspects of the Review Group phases, while others were not a position to comment on this and drew from subsequent stages in the programme. The first column in the main interpretive tables allows the reader to identify the stage(s) with which each interview participant was mostly closely involved, without directly compromising their anonymity.

It is hoped that what emerges, the previous qualifications notwithstanding, provides a balance of depth of description together with the identification of any significant patterns that emerged. A further balance to be struck (to which I remain sensitive throughout) was between the relatively subjective nature of reflective analysis and the more objective substance of systematic methods of qualitative analysis. As I contend elsewhere, objectivity has been sought through the breadth and balance of interview subjects and their perspectives, as well as the thoroughness, and I would hope, the professionalism of the evidence collection and analysis process. All of the interview transcripts and/or notes are available for examiners' scrutiny, subject to issues around non-attribution and anonymity. These are appended to the submission on a USB pen drive given the size of the files.

It should also be noted here that the analysis I undertook was for a very particular purpose around the completion of this dissertation. The full transcripts offer a rich source for further analysis for different purposes in the future, although the ethical sensitivity towards any direct or inadvertent attribution would remain. Indeed, as is typical for many Doctoral studies, the process of funnelling the scope of my study towards an achievable focus meant that I have had to discard many of the insights that emerged from the broader set of questions applied in each interview.

The data from the interviews is used in three ways: firstly in a synthetic or inter-relational mode, where the different accounts have been merged and cross-referenced to provide evidence of emergent patterns; secondly, where individual accounts are paraphrased in

order to highlight or support a particular observation on my part [this may also occur in the case of the three interviews which were not directly recorded or transcribed]; thirdly, where I have quoted verbatim responses from interviewees. The latter approach provides considerable authenticity and insight in the context of this study, and retains:

‘the flavour of the original data...not only because they are often more illuminative and direct than the researchers’ own words, but also because they feel that it is important to be faithful to the exact words used’ (Cohen et al., p.462).

Cohen also notes that direct quotes also arguably carry significant weight when they come from the more powerful (*op.cit*). Of course the balance to be struck involved sifting well over 100 000 words of transcribed interviews to maintain a focussed analysis; identifying the essential key direct quotes, while also ensuring that the dissertation overall provides a balance of my own voice and opinion with the words of the ‘witnesses’ to the CfE policymaking process. If the use of direct quotes appears overly generous to the reader, I believe I can justify this given the relative rarity in Scottish education with which such accounts are heard; and the oral testimony of key participants is intended to offer a core legacy for this particular study. A similar approach to the use of extended quotes helped to illustrate McPherson and Raab’s account of Scottish policymaking (1988). The vast majority of direct quotes are also located in a particular interpretive context. Gadamer notes (2004: p. 306) that such interpretation:

‘...is not an occasional, post facto supplement to understanding; rather, understanding is always interpretation, and hence interpretation is the explicit form of understanding’.

I decided that, in order to test the consistency of responses from the various respondents, insofar as it was possible I would ask the same questions (with only very minor variations) to each interviewee. Variations might occur where for example it was clear that an individual respondent did not represent an organisation as such, so the focus would be on their personal engagement with the policy process around CfE, rather than asking them to comment on their institution’s role. The core interview questions are listed

in the appendices. Beyond the core questions, however, the semi-structured nature of the interviews and the inclusion of a number of open questions allowed for quite extensive discussions that were inevitably (and desirably) unique to each individual respondent.

Table 1 overleaf provides a summary of the coverage of the key issues that emerged in the interviews. It shows the extent to which the conduct of the interviews themselves was effective in steering the respondents towards the specific questions I had prepared for them, as well as additional issues that emerged through the semi-structured approach taken. It should be noted that the interviews with H & I took place as a three way conversation without the benefit of audio recording, therefore it proved difficult to subsequently disaggregate the views of these two individuals from notes alone. The interview with O was also not audio recorded, and did not follow the standard Interview Questions schedule, so it proved harder to segment and apply comments to this framework. Interviewee M was not directly or formally involved in the CfE process, thus some questions and themes were not explored to the same extent.

Table 1 Coverage of key issues in the Interview Transcripts

Interviewee/ Issue	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Role	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Consultation/ engagement	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Partnership	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Other	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Organisations															
Review		x	x				x			x					x
Group															
Remits		x	x		x		x			x	x				
Policy				x						x		x			
Learning															
Continuity/ Civil Service		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Consensus	x	x	x	x	x		x								
Subject		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Groups															
Change of Govt.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Research informed		x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x		
Post devolution		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Sequence of developments				x	x					x					
Assessment & Qualifications					x					x				x	x
Most effective	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Less effective	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

Many of the issues listed in Table 1 are tied directly to the main research questions that underpin this study, and these are generally well covered in the interview data, for example views on the more effective and less effective aspects of the CfE policy process are covered by all but one respondent; and all respondents offered views on the nature and/or management process underpinning the core Partnership (of LTS, HMIE, SQA, and SEED/Scottish Government).

Some of the issues are less directly associated with the main questions, but are in some way illustrative or informative. For example, examining the creation of the eight Subject Areas just after the transition from Review Group to Programme Board provides some insight into the ownership of processes, and the motivations that lie behind certain decisions in the policymaking process. By analysing the interview data in this way, it allowed me to focus my interpretation predominantly around those aspects with the widest coverage, although elements that are less widespread here are worth pursuing as areas for further study.

The next step in the process of analysis and interpretation was to attempt, where possible, to group the interview data in a way that would be both manageable and of value in responding to my particular questions. I decided to do this ‘manually’ rather than using any of the possible software packages (such as NVivo). In retrospect it might have been better to invest the time in familiarising myself with something like this, as the manual approach was quite laborious, although I feel that I retained a close proximity to the material which ultimately helped in my analysis. Furthermore, I wasn’t looking to examine sophisticated inter-relational patterns in such a relatively small qualitative data set, except where certain correlations might add interest, such as the apparent relationship between the insider/outsider status of some respondents and the relative positivity towards the overall policy process.

In order to break down the transcripts into manageable sections, I segmented them as far as possible in line with the sequence of standard questions (although the capacity of some interviewees for digression, and my responses to this digression, made this occasionally

difficult). I then filtered the segments further by the themes that emerged in the Coding Sections below. The two questions about the most and least effective aspects of the CfE process were also grouped together. In each case I retained the information about interviewee roles as this was of possible relevance to the power and governance aspects to the study.

I decided to focus on those themes that I could directly relate to at least eight of the interviewees' responses in order to introduce sufficient comparability of responses. I then sought to group them and to code them in a more systematic manner. These groupings are described below. This grouping is to some extent reflected in the structure of my analysis in later chapters. It can also be found in the coding tables in the Appendices.

Coding Section 1:

- participants' views on the nature/extent of consultation and/or engagement in the CfE process
- the role and management of the official Partnership
- the involvement of other groups/institutions in the process
- the impact, if any, of the change in Government in 2007
- their view on whether post-devolution policymaking was tangibly different

Coding Section 2:

- the creation of the eight Subject Groups
- the issue of civil service continuity
- the extent to which the CfE development was research informed (also subsumed within this was the extent of policy learning)

Coding Section 3: Effectiveness:

- the most effective aspects of the overall process
- the least/less effective aspects of the overall process

Other themes, while not as conducive to being coded in a comparative manner, nonetheless remain crucial to my overall analysis and are referred to in a more narrative fashion where appropriate. Where some comparative dimension can be achieved I

highlight this at the appropriate point. In a similar fashion, certain especially illustrative or illuminating quotes are incorporated into my analysis, irrespective of the frequency or general prominence of the particular theme.

Additional themes considered in narrative.

- the establishment and operation of the Review Group
- the clarity of remits around the key organisational structures
- the issue of consensus as a feature of Scottish educational policymaking
- the sequence of key events/thematic transitions [reference to conclusions]
- the place of assessment and qualifications in the process

With regard to presenting the coded data, I have inserted a number of Tables at the relevant points in the text that collate the dispositions of the different interviewees towards some of the themes above. In these tables, a negative (-) signifies that on balance, the interviewee felt that a particular dimension to the process had been ineffectual or in some way poor, a positive (+) signifies that they had passed favourable comment, a zero (0) value indicates a neutral stance, and a question mark (?) denotes the absence in my interview data of sufficient evidence or comment to ascribe a value. The full coding Tables are provided in the Appendices.

Having set out the procedures for analysing the interview data, I will now go on to present a detailed exploration of the CfE policy process.

**CHAPTER 4 GENEALOGY AND GOVERNANCE OF CfE
FROM 1997-2004: THE CONTEXT AND THE VISION
SECTION 1: THE CHRONOLOGY OF A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE**

In this Chapter I will provide a summary of some of the key events and publications in the period from 1997 to 2004, together with a detailed appraisal of what to me are the pivotal moments in the process. In particular I focus on the National Debate and the establishment of the Curriculum Review Group. Chapter Five will examine the second phase from 2004 to 2010. This section provides two visual depictions of the overall chronology. Table 2 provides a very brief summary of the major events in the period 1997-2010, while Figure 5 provides a genealogical depiction of the sequence of events.

Table 2 Summary chronology of CfE and related events

Towards the Vision

1997 Election of New Labour to UK government. Referendum on whether there should be a Scottish Parliament; and whether the Parliament should have limited tax-varying powers.

1999 Establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

2000 SQA Exams Crisis. Review of functions of HMIE.

2002 National Debate on Education.

2003 Curriculum Review Group established.

2004 *A Curriculum for Excellence* published in November 2004 together with the Ministerial response.

From Vision to Implementation

2004 The Curriculum Review Programme Board was established.

2005 Research and review process; Subject Groups established.

2006 Progress and Proposals published and Building the Curriculum series begun.

2007 Scottish Parliament Election: minority SNP Government.

2007 to 2008 Draft experiences and outcomes published, followed by an engagement process.

2009 - Publication of the new curriculum guidelines (Experiences and Outcomes and associated advice).

2009 to 2011 - Planning and implementation. Revised Qualifications Framework begins to emerge.

August 2010 - Formal implementation date for the new curriculum. Approximate end point for this study.

(2011) Election of majority SNP Government

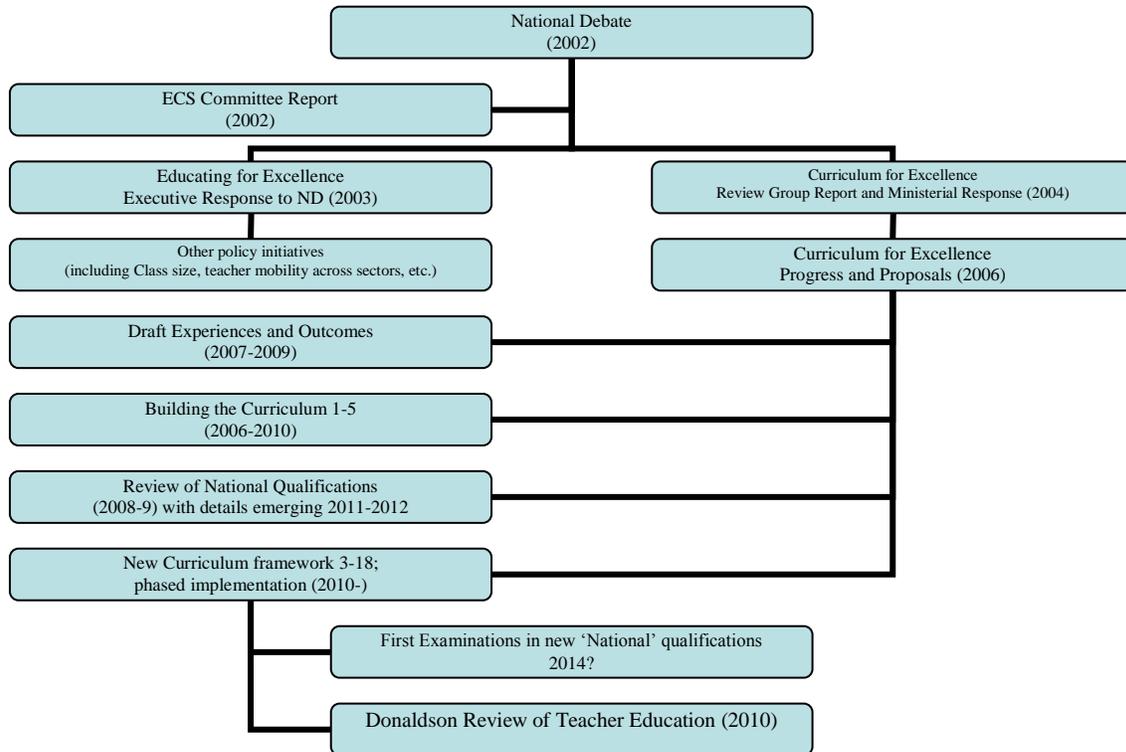
(2014) Possible Referendum on Independence

In addition to this straightforward chronology I developed Figure 5 below as a genealogical representation of CfE in much the same way as a family tree might be rendered in conventional genealogy. By visualising developments in this way I tried to capture some of the key relational links between different stages in the policy process.

For example I have represented the National Debate (2002) as the common progenitor of both CfE and a range of other policy developments. It suggests that one major strand of development from the National Debate was devoted to curriculum change (through CfE itself and the related documents such as the *Building the Curriculum* series). The other policy responses to the National Debate were more diffuse and diverse, covering some of the key conclusions such as class sizes (although the lack of a legislative commitment to this, together with budgetary constraints and the Concordats' removal of ring-fencing of educational budgets, led to the unravelling of this priority). I discuss this illustrative example later in relation to the question around a politicised policy process.

The (Scottish Parliament-led) Education Committee (ECS) Enquiry and subsequent Report into the purposes of education took place at more or less the same time as the (Scottish Executive-led) National Debate. This parallel process is an interesting illustration of the separation of powers between the executive and legislative/scrutiny branches of post devolution governance in Scotland, and appears to represent the spirit of extended engagement with wider civic society promoted by the CSG Report (1998).

Figure 5 *A Curriculum for Excellence: Key Events and Related Publications*



This representation of the flow of policy emanating from the National Debate might suggest that the process was relatively clear and rational in direction. However the accounts that I will provide later of this period will suggest that the reality of policy development was more complex and contingent.

CHAPTER 4

SECTION 2: THE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

“A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties and of battles long ago. It has in it some of the secret workings of national life. It reflects, while seeking to remedy, the failings of national character”

Sadler, 1900, cited in Mackintosh (1962: p. 15).

In the quote above from the dawn of the 20th Century, Sadler anticipates elements of the genealogical approach I endorsed for this study. He recognises the organic nature of educational policy, as well as the occluded elements of power that are enacted within the system. This section contributes to the genealogy of CfE by establishing the political and constitutional context from which it emerged. I situate the development on a timeline that begins in the pre-devolution era; taking us through the advent of devolution; then into the post-devolutionary period. The evidence and analysis is derived both from relevant literature and from some of the empirical interviews.

The complex web of political, cultural and social circumstances that ultimately led to devolution reached its nadir in the late 1980s and early-mid 1990s, a period during which consecutive Conservative Governments had been elected at UK level in the absence of a persuasive electoral mandate, in Scotland. This situation called into question the political legitimacy of any attempts to influence ‘domestic’ policy within areas of Scottish public life; although the unionist position has always been that the UK electoral and constitutional framework was sufficient to confer legitimacy of policy across the different nations of the United Kingdom.

The Conservative administrations in this period sought to enact a number of educational reforms in Scotland that were often variants of policy pursued with greater zeal in England and Wales. Some initiatives proved highly unpopular in the Scottish system, including the opportunity for schools to ‘opt out’ of local authority control, and met with

considerable organised resistance from the profession itself or other nodes of power in the system such as local government. However as Devine notes (1999: p.604), it is easy to forget that a small number of the Conservative-led reforms actually proved popular in Scotland, including greater parental choice in placing their children in schools.

As is often the case in Scotland, the prominence of an individual, in this case Michael Forsyth in his roles as Secretary of State for Scotland and Minister for Education, personified and attracted much of the hostility that emerged from within Scottish education. Of course it was the key institutions and personalities of Humes' 'leadership class' who as civil servants in the Scottish Office, local government officers, or functionaries within the main quangos who were professionally responsible for taking forward these reforms. During this period, the processes of policy mediation became ever more subtle. Within the 'policy community', individuals and organisations were sometimes torn between their duties to enact policy and curriculum reform, and the desire in some instances to subvert, or at the very least to maintain a consensual approach to these initiatives. During this period there was also some subversion and resistance to the reforms by classroom practitioners (this phenomenon is described in general terms elsewhere, for example Lipsky, 1980 in Pinar p668).

It would however be misleading to suggest that the ideas of consultation and participative policymaking were entirely absent in pre-devolution Scotland. The general thrust of policymaking was arguably already shifting towards more consultative and deliberative patterns. Indeed McPherson and Raab (1988: p.ix) quote a former Secretary of State who shared his frustration and exasperation about the consultative imperative:

'I sometimes wished that I could just make up my mind about something and say that this would be the end of it, instead of saying, 'Well, this is what I think ought to happen, now please consult people about this'; and then they come back about a year later and say that they are sorry, but everybody is all over the place, which is what normally happens, you see'.

Similarly, according to Hart & Tuck (2007: p.123) there was considerable ‘consultation fatigue’ amongst the teaching profession during the Higher Still development in the 1990s.

During the 1980s and 1990s a coalition of political and civic activists emerged in response to the apparent ‘democratic deficit’ between the will of the Scottish people and the policies and ideology that were being imposed (in the view of many) without an authentic mandate. The Scottish Constitutional Convention, established in 1989, produced a Claim of Right for Scotland that blended political and constitutional demands with specific recommendations for the conduct of policy under a devolved government (Lynch, 2001: p. 11-13), including ‘the need for consensus politics, power-sharing, civic involvement, consultation...’. The hope was for a revitalised style of governance that would reassert ‘the basic sovereignty of the people’ (Brown, 2000: p550).

The conflation of *political-constitutional* objectives with *operational* principles instigated by the Constitutional Convention was subsequently reiterated in the emerging legal and institutional frameworks that defined and enshrined the apparatus of devolution, including the Labour Government’s White Paper ‘*Scotland’s Parliament*’ (Scottish Office, 1997), the *Scotland Act* in 1998, and the *Consultative Steering Group* report (CSG, 1998).

This latter Report, published under the auspices of the Scottish Office in December 1998, was the outcome of a consultative process that, mirroring a common feature of policy development that is described elsewhere in this dissertation, involved the mediated deliberations of a selected group of individuals drawn from a range of backgrounds. The remit of the Group was primarily focussed on the ‘operational needs and working methods...[and]...the rules and procedures and Standing Orders’ of the Scottish Parliament (CSG, 1998: p. vii). It acknowledged a debt to the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention (CSG, 1998: p.3) and Crick and Millar’s work (1995). It also built on principles that had been established in the UK Government white paper *Scotland’s Parliament* (Scottish Office, 1997), namely,

‘that the Parliament would adopt modern methods of working; that it would be accessible, open and responsive to the needs of the public; that participation by organisations and individuals in decision-making would be encouraged; that views and advice from policy specialists would be sought as appropriate...’
(CSG, 1998: p.1).

The CSG Report proved to have a very influential in my professional role in the Parliament at the time as it provided a set of principles, notably around the elements relating to accessibility, openness and participation that helped to shape the ethos and operations of the Parliament’s Education Service. It should be emphasised that although the main thrust of these developments and recommendations related specifically to the new Scottish Parliament, they were also intended to influence the practices of the Executive branch, and by extension, the entire landscape and machinery of public policymaking in post-devolution Scotland. As Canon Kenyon Wright, a prominent member of both the Constitutional Convention and the CSG had previously noted:

‘We came to understand that our central need, if we were to be governed justly and democratically was not just to change the government [during the period of the ‘democratic deficit’] but to change the rules’ (Wright, 1997; quoted in Devine, 1999: p. 607).

As Scotland edged closer towards devolution, a number of commentators began to reflect on how the advent of the Parliament would impact specifically on educational policymaking. How, in Wright’s terms above, would the ‘rules change’? The importance of education as a symbol of Scottish cultural distinctiveness meant that it was always likely to be viewed by those in favour of devolution as emblematic of the opportunities presented by greater autonomy. Another factor contributing to its prominence in the discourse of possibility around devolution was the apparently pluralistic and consensual pre-existing policy landscape (certainly in comparison with other jurisdictions in the UK).

Paterson (2000a) anticipated some of the ways in which policymaking might be enhanced post-devolution. He offered (with some caution) the prospect of enhanced legitimacy and participation in the post-devolution era. In his words, the aspirations and stakes were high:

‘Renewing Scottish pluralism would be no mean achievement, after the centralism and atrophy of consultation which happened in the Tory years’ (Paterson, 2000b).

He suggested that, with the advent of the Parliament, the ‘rule of the civic elites is no longer impregnable’ (Paterson, 2000a: p. 77). This implied that the landscape described previously by Humes (1986) and McPherson and Raab (1988) might be challenged and altered in the post-devolution era.

In any event, some of the early optimism around new ways of doing policy appeared to dissipate quite rapidly. Some commentators argued that, certainly in the early post-devolution phase, the broader aspirations towards democratic renewal and civic re-engagement had not been realised. Paterson (2000b) noted that the expectations surrounding the potential for democratic renewal had been perhaps unrealistically high, leading to an early sense of disappointment and disillusionment. Hassan (2002: p.21) suggested that:

‘...democratic accountability and transparency has not been increased-the shift from narrow political processes of devolution to the wider goal of greater self-government has not yet occurred’.

These themes around the nature of post-devolution policymaking are of course central to this study, and I will return to them later as I seek to evaluate the extent to which CfE is a product of this context and these principles.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECTION 3: THE NATIONAL DEBATE (2002) AS PRECURSOR TO CfE

The institutional backdrop to the National Debate involved a Parliament and a Government still trying to find their feet in the aftermath of the excitement around devolution that had been swiftly followed by some deflation in euphoria and optimism. The first elections to the new Scottish Parliament had taken place on May 6th 1999, and the first sitting of the Parliament followed on May 12th. In my then post as head of the Education Service at the Parliament, I was in the Chamber that day as a direct witness to the sense of historical occasion, summed up by veteran SNP politician Winnie Ewing in her statement from the Presiding Officer's chair:

‘The Scottish Parliament, adjourned on the 25th day of March in the year 1707, is hereby reconvened.’

With regard to the constitutional context, devolution involved the transfer of a range of powers from the UK Government at Westminster to the Scottish Parliament and Government in Edinburgh. Some powers were reserved to the UK Parliament, including Defence; macro-economic and fiscal policy; and Immigration and Nationality. The devolved powers included Health, Social Work, Local Government and Education.

The new Parliament had a range of new functions, structures, and operating principles, as enshrined in the Scotland Act and the CSG report. There was a relatively strong Committee system that differed in some important aspects from the Westminster model, including the right of Committees to initiate legislation, and a Public Petitions Committee, with the possibility of legislative ideas originating from the public, or at the very least, for the public to have direct influence on the Parliament's agenda.

The Scottish Executive was established to support Ministers and to drive policy and initiate the majority of legislation. As will be described in Chapter 4, the civil servants within the new Scottish Executive (and latterly the Scottish Government) remain part of the UK civil service apparatus. Ministers would be held accountable through Parliamentary Questions, scrutiny of Ministers and their Departments by cognate

Committees (who could also initiate enquiries, as happened in relation to the SQA crisis in 2000 (Raffe, Howieson & Tinklin, 2002)).

In 2002 the Scottish Executive instigated a search for a new collective vision for Scottish education. The National Debate on Education, launched in the Parliament in March 2002, was the catalyst for subsequent developments that led directly to CfE. The wider policy context encompassed some other crucial developments in the system, notably the McCrone settlement on teachers' pay and conditions, and the accompanying reappraisal of the nature of teacher professionalism; and the post-SQA crisis landscape.

In her speech introducing the National Debate, the then Minister for Education and Young People, Cathy Jamieson, indicated that the Executive would, the following year, be publishing its 'strategy for the future of school education, which will look at least 10 years ahead'.

However this strategy would not be determined solely by the Executive. She stated that the Executive's role was:

'to lead in developing policy, but that is not the same as imposing our views on people without proper consultation.'

She also indicated she wanted to:

'hear as many views as possible on what people want from our schools, so that the strategy will be as robust and as grounded in reality as possible. Crucially, I want to build on evidence from the people who deliver education in our schools every day and who know what works.'

(Scottish Parliament, 2002: online).

The rhetoric of this announcement locates it firmly in the context of the post-devolution landscape. It was viewed by one observer as 'an attempt to re-instil in the community the participative spirit of the new Scotland' (Pickard and Dobie, 2003: p.25).

A number of my interviewees suggested that the time was ripe for such a review: there was almost a ‘millennial view’ [interviewee F] that the confluence of constitutional change, a new and more open polity, and the start of the 21st Century represented a once in a generation opportunity to re-imagine and remake Scottish education. Another interviewee [C] suggested that the National Debate was an opportunity to establish a new consensus around the strengths of the Scottish system, while also identifying issues that needed to be addressed. A related, if slightly more cynical viewpoint was that the National Debate was a way of presenting a particular [pre-existing] perspective on education as the ‘settled will’ of the Scottish people [E].

I suggested to one interviewee that using the National Debate as a catalyst for change had enabled the Scottish Government to celebrate the traditional Scottish educational values but to use that as the consensus building point to then move onto what was quite a radical change in teaching and learning. The interviewee agreed very succinctly: ‘Hearts followed by minds’ [Interviewee N].

Further evidence of the new policy landscape came with the concurrent establishment of the Scottish Parliament’s Education Culture and Sport (ECS) Committee Enquiry into the Purposes of Education. The Minister acknowledged and endorsed the model of twin-track enquiries; the National Debate being a mass participation, and relatively open ended review with fewer guiding parameters, while the ECS Enquiry would delve more deeply into the fundamental purposes of education. The Committee would also be able to exercise its power to call witnesses, and would seek to reconcile different perspectives and ideologies given its composition of MSPs from the different main Parties.

In many respects the two enquiries and how they were framed represent the epitome (and perhaps the high water mark) of the ‘new politics’ that were intended to be embedded in the fabric and culture of the new constitutional arrangements and practices. There was some initial scepticism expressed about the authenticity of the National Debate as an exercise in consultation, and this emerged in some of the responses (Scottish Executive, 2002: p3). Concerns were also raised about the claims to inclusion around the ECS

Committee Enquiry. Pirrie and Lowden (2004) suggested that the latter enquiry had singularly failed to capture the views of those who are normally excluded from education or civic life.

These concerns notwithstanding, by the standards of most such exercises there was a considerable response to the National Debate: approximately 20,000 people participated in set-piece dialogues around the issues, and around 1,500 written responses were received (Scottish Executive, 2002: p3).

The Scottish Executive responded directly to the outcomes of the National Debate (and less explicitly to the ECS Committee Enquiry) in a number of ways. *'Educating for Excellence, Choice and Opportunity: The Executive's Response to the National Debate'* was published in 2003 (Scottish Executive, 2003). Alongside a very clear commitment to the principle of comprehensive education it laid down six key policy actions to address some of the most frequent concerns arising in the National Debate. The proposed actions were to:

- ensure that every pupil's learning needs are met;
- increase involvement of parents in their children's education;
- reduce curriculum overload and create more local flexibility and choice;
- reduce the amount of time taken up by tests and exams;
- give headteachers more control over the running of their schools; and
- create bright, modern places to learn (Scottish Executive, 2003: p2).

Of the six proposed actions, the germ of what would become CfE is most apparent in the first, third and fourth bullet points. It is interesting to review this document as a whole since it set out a long term strategic plan for several key aspects of Scottish education up to 2013, and some of what we recognise in the wider policy landscape today is indeed foreshadowed there (although other elements are missing). One of the next steps identified for priority action was to 'increase pupil choice by *reviewing the school curriculum*' (Scottish Executive, 2003: p6. emphasis added); for those with a particular interest in tracing the genealogy of CfE, much as explorers once searched for the true

source of the Nile, perhaps this is the clearest signal of intent. What is less clear in a genealogical sense is the ultimate fate of the wider set of strategic objectives that were outlined in 2003. They might have served as the kind of clear benchmarking and goal setting, together with specific objectives and deadlines, which would have contributed to a more rational policy approach. Instead they seem to have disappeared into policymaking obscurity.

A number of senior policy interviewees were very clear that in terms of the policy genealogy, CfE originated in the National Debate. One of them suggested that it was evident fairly early on that one of the big issues [from the National Debate] was about relevance and structure of the curriculum, and:

‘there was a sense in which the world was saying to us, what we're working with now is alright as a product but we're not confident it's the right curriculum for where we need to go. So, from that perspective it was a fairly open remit’.

Another suggested that a conservative reading of the outcomes of the Debate would have been that minimal change was needed. In other words, the outcomes of the National Debate (in this reading) endorsed the view that Scottish education did not require any major rethink. Instead, it was interpreted by the Executive as a call for possibly far-reaching change.

CHAPTER FOUR

SECTION 4: THE REVIEW GROUP AND REPORT (2004)

The next stage in the process was the Scottish Executive's decision to convene a Review Group to present a broad curricular response to the outcomes of the National Debate. In particular, there was a sense that there remained a lack of clarity about the purposes of the curriculum that had to be addressed. Later in this section I will examine in some detail the process that led to the formation and operation of the Group. Before doing so it is incumbent on the genealogist to examine closely the claims to inheritance, and a number of issues emerge in relation to the paternity of CfE.

According to the Review Group Report, it emerged from 'the most extensive consultation ever of the people of Scotland on the state of school education' (SEED, 2004a: p6). The implication here is that policy in this context is being shaped and driven in response to public demand, as expressed in the National Debate. However when one compares the detail of the major outcomes from the National Debate one finds that the two core themes that emerged in responses to the question, 'What are the main things that need to be improved and why?' were:

- standards of pupil behaviour/discipline including more support for disruptive pupils within or outwith mainstream schools;
- a real increase in resources being spent on schools including more teaching staff, smaller class sizes and better school buildings.

(Munn, 2002, online).

However these fundamental concerns around discipline and resources are not referred to among the key changes prescribed in CfE (SEED, 2000a: p7). Instead, the document states that 'People argued for changes which would:

1. reduce an overcrowded curriculum
2. better connect the different stages of the 3-18 curriculum
3. achieve a better balance between 'academic' and 'vocational' subjects

4. equip young people with new skills for tomorrow's workforce
5. make sure that assessment and certification support learning
6. allow more choice to meet the needs of individual young people'

(Adapted from SEED, 2004a: p7).

The apparent discontinuity of some objectives between the National Debate and CfE can be interpreted in a number of ways. A sympathetic interpretation might point to the fact that the two priorities identified do not relate directly to curriculum change and therefore fall outwith the ambit of CfE. However the key curriculum reforms that *were* identified in the National Debate responses are: greater curriculum flexibility, a more interesting and relevant curriculum, including teaching Scottish history and politics and starting modern languages earlier, and the need for more practical subjects. Recurring themes are identified as flexibility, relevance and interest (Munn, 2002: online). While some of these aspects emerge in CfE, others are absent, and the relationship between the original consultation exercise and the concrete outcomes of the review process are at best unclear in some regards.

According to a civil service interviewee, the Government set things in motion with the National Debate, then the Review Group Report was 'very closely aligned to policy development'. The Ministerial Response provided immediate political impetus'. This account suggests that there was indeed a combination of drive from the National Debate, together with some political imperatives in search of legitimacy.

One interviewee noted that other policy agendas and priorities can sometimes appear unexpectedly:

'...one of the lessons from Higher Still was that you need to make sure that some of the key decisions have been fully consulted on or owned and although there was a lot of consultation going on with Higher Still, *one or two crucial bits that sort of got into the system without that consultation*' [K: *emphasis added*].

This pattern is identified elsewhere in relation to the *Improving Our Schools* consultation exercise in 1999 (Humes, 2003: p.82).

Arshad et al (2007: p. 133) are very critical of the notion that CfE derives greater legitimacy because of the National Debate, and that the process captured all the voices that had to be heard. They suggest that the process was controlled by powerful centralised forces:

‘the scope, tone and content of the consultation document, the consultation process and the information from the consultation responses *selectively inserted* into the post-consultation summary were largely determined by the education polity. While dozens of consultative sessions were held, were the voices of the disenfranchised represented, heard or given place?’ [emphasis added]

An area of particular interest for me was establishing how such an influential group had been convened. At least in the Scottish context, the composition of groups such as these is very rarely explained or justified in the official documentation: the convention appears to be to provide a list of group members as an appendix to the Report without any further explanation or rationale. Such groups are rarely recruited openly: my understanding of the situation is that, where there is no remuneration on offer and the appointment is to a short life working group, the usual norms of public sector recruitment need not apply (Public Appointments Online).

The process of the establishment and composition of the Review Group was led by the Scottish Executive, with the relevant Minister (Peter Peacock at the time) tasking civil servants with these responsibilities. Some consideration was apparently given to whether it would be appropriate to have the Minister himself as Chair of the Review Group, or whether an external representative might chair proceedings. In the event the decision was taken within the Executive that they would lead the process, with a civil servant in the chair: this was justified by an interviewee in the following terms:

‘they [Ministers] need a little bit of distance from what the group was thinking and saying in order to make the right decisions...’ [G].

With regard to identifying the composition of the Review Group itself, a senior civil servant respondent offered a candid and revealing perspective on the process and principles by which such a Group is typically selected:

‘There’s no great magic to it... You need a good group of competent people, you need a spread of interests across sectors and across the range of opinion... you put together a list of names of people who might make up the group; you look at the balance of that, you try to look at it from an external perspective to see whether people will think of it as the right group of people to take forward an exercise like this... does it [the proposed group membership] have credibility, gravitas, does it include the major points of view, the major interests?’.

Another senior figure from a different context suggested that, with regard to the composition of the key reference groups, you ‘can’t create a template’, and you have to proceed with ‘horses for courses’. Nonetheless there are some key principles to take into account: including the group dynamic; what happens afterwards [with perhaps an implication that there might be a desire to avoid recruiting people who might subsequently be inclined to ‘break ranks’?]; the need for creative thinkers who also bring some credibility to the table; as well as people who are willing to ask hard questions.

In this individual’s view, the figurehead/Chair should have been a ‘professional figure’ rather than a civil servant. With regard to CfE,

‘Ministers have always been too closely associated with it, through their Civil Servants. Through the *Changing to Deliver* reforms, they (the Civil Service) thought this was required of them’.

This observation appears to be supported by a civil servant interviewee who asserted that:

‘...the drafting of the original 2004 document and the Ministerial Response was definitely a partnership between policy makers and Ministers... The Minister at that time Peter Peacock was kept closely involved and had his own views on how his response should be worded so it was quite a hands-on process.’

One consequence of the enhanced role for civil servants was what one interviewee suggested was an absence of ‘professional leadership’ at crucial stages in the gestation and early implementation phases of CfE. In this view there was too much distance between the central group driving forward change and the professional population of teachers at large who were expected to incorporate the reforms in their practice.

In the views expressed on the ideal composition of working groups such as the Review Group, it is interesting to note the desire for a spectrum of perspectives; alongside the awareness of external perceptions around the legitimacy of the selected individuals and the institutions they might represent. It is evident that there might be tensions in striking a balance between the engagement of representative individuals and key stakeholder interests, and the desire to have a group dynamic that is not instinctively resistant to the ‘direction of travel’ noted above of the commissioning body, in this case the Scottish Executive and its Ministers.

The ultimate decision on membership rests with the Minister (who it can be argued carries the legitimacy of democratic office and accountability to Parliament):

‘You take that [list of nominees] to Ministers, perhaps with some options around some of the members, to seek their approval...by and large, certainly for [the Review Group], I don’t recall anybody saying no not interested. I think we got all those we’ve wanted on the thing’ [civil service interviewee].

The composition of the Review Group (see Appendices) included representatives of a range of interests, including local authorities, parents, FE colleges, Primary and Secondary Head Teachers, and prospective employers, in the guise of CBI Scotland. There were two University academics and a Secondary teacher who to an extent represented one of the Professional Associations (see discussion below). There was also a prominent role for the four core ‘Partner’ stakeholders who were identified early in the process as central to the subsequent translation of the Review into practice: SEED, HMIE, SQA and LTS. The total group comprised 19 individuals, of whom seven were

interviewed for this dissertation; in addition there were occasional ‘guest attendees’ at meetings of the Review Group, mainly civil servants from SEED.

From the perspective of the invitees themselves, there were mixed views on the nature of the process by which selection had taken place for inclusion on the key groups. Three interviewees [B, E, K] referred to the involvement of ‘the usual suspects’; one adding that ‘most of us knew the rules of the game’ and that ‘the participants were members of the educational establishment’ [B]. In a similar vein one felt that this was a group composed of ‘people who were used to this kind of work’, that ‘the power of patronage was still important and that the process by which the group had been brought together was somewhat of a ‘mystery’ [E].

One interviewee told me that the vast majority of the group were already familiar faces:

‘...when I got into the room for the first meeting I think there were about sixteen or seventeen folk there, but probably about fifteen of them I had already met in other formal situations’ (B)

This familiarity with other group members appears to be a function of the ‘small world’ phenomenon within a relatively small country such as Scotland, and the even more compressed spatial realities of the educational system within that country. Nonetheless it is a remarkable observation that so many members of a group should be known to each other: this perhaps calls into question some of the aspirations towards broader and more inclusive engagement highlighted by the CSG report (1998). Is it possible to reconcile this phenomenon with the post-devolution rhetoric of wider engagement? Can such an outcome nonetheless be justified, in that democratic systems are entitled to call on a legitimately delegated technocracy of their choice to support policy development?

One member of the Review Group expressed mild surprise at having been invited to join:

‘my first reaction when I was invited to participate in the group was one of surprise because in a sense over the years I have been involved in a lot of such

groups but laterally had become a bit of critic of aspects of the policy making process. I didn't really expect to be invited to be involved again' [C].

This raises another issue around such appointments; the surprise expressed above hints at a sense, at least from this individual, that a willingness to criticise is not necessarily conducive to such appointments. These observations around the familiarity with others, the terminology around 'usual suspects' and 'playing the game' emerged only from those interviewees outwith the 'official' domain. One interpretation of this situation from the 'official' side comes from a civil servant quoted in an internal document from the Scottish Executive (2005: p. 5) who provides an alternative perspective on such processes:

'the "usual suspects" are usual for a very good reason... instead of using a "blanket stakeholder list"... there's a time and place for a chat with half a dozen organisations who can help us'.

From this point of view, the tendency towards approaching the same individuals is perfectly legitimate. It should not be viewed in sinister terms as the exercise of patronage; rather it should be understood as good practice in the search for expertise that can usefully be applied to the policy process.

Irrespective of where one stands in relation to this phenomenon (whether supportive or suspicious) it strikes me that there remains a surprising informality in such an important aspect of the development of policy. It is far removed from the more formal statutory procedures for other forms of public appointments that have to conform with legislation as suggested previously.

There was a sense from a number of Review Group interviewees that they had not been identified primarily as a representative; rather, personal qualities and attributes were seen as of value to the process. While the majority of Review Group members might be formally aligned with some kind of 'interest group' they were encouraged to think and to

contribute as independent individuals. In one participant's view this was ultimately reflected in their deliberations:

‘...it is fair to say that all participants were careful, consciously or otherwise, not to argue partisan positions - clearly they were informed if you like by the constituencies which they represented but they were very clear that they were not arguing simply the interests of these constituencies’(B).

In some cases, Group members had been involved in previous relevant developments or the process of analysis around the submissions to the National Debate for example. The higher echelons of Scottish education, and indeed Scottish civic and intellectual life, still seem to play out between a restricted cast of characters, so that such groups can be constituted with some confidence on the basis that many of the most desired categories of representatives are also known and trusted figures in their own right.

The role and performance on the Review Group of one individual, George MacBride, was highlighted without prompting by a number of interviewees as an example of someone who would normally be considered as a representative of a particular sectional interest (in his case as a senior figure in the EIS, the largest single professional association in Scotland), but who in the event made a contribution that transcended the relatively narrow set of interests implied. This ability to contribute to a wider picture was seen as unusual and exceptional by another Review Group member:

‘...you had in the EIS an outstanding individual in George MacBride but they don't come round very often and it was coincidence. If George hadn't been there, it would have been interesting to see how their contribution would have gone and it probably may have focussed on some of the non-educational issues’ [J].

In this view a more typical contribution from one of the professional associations might have changed the focus of their deliberations onto issues around the professional status,

terms and conditions of teachers, which would have been seen as an unhelpful distraction to the broader vision.

One of the few direct criticisms of the composition of the Review Group itself that I encountered was that:

‘there weren’t enough educationalists around the table and everybody was allied to [a] more liberal vision of education away from the restrictions of qualifications, courses and exams but nobody...said how do we make this a reality in an infrastructure that is subject based, subject teachers in secondary education, discrete examinations, a labelling that everybody could understand and employers could understand. How do you move away from that into something else?’ [J]

In the view of this respondent, the apparent imbalance, and lack of breadth in conceptual perspectives across the Review Group went on to have significant negative consequences for the development and implementation process, by postponing the critical decisions around revision of qualifications and examinations.

Some interviewees also commented on my supplementary questions on the remit and working practices of the Group. There was unanimity among the members interviewed that the Group functioned well together, and in particular that they benefitted from very able and focussed chairing by Philip Rycroft, a civil servant who was at the time the Head of Schools Group within SEED. His qualities and efficacy were referred to unprompted by a number of interviewees:

‘Philip is a good chair and he had clarity about [the Group’s remit]’ [J]

‘Philip Rycroft had just come back into the scene having been seconded to industry and he had very clear ideas about how the Review Group should run...’[E]

‘...a lot of [effective working practices] were down to the style of chairing by Philip Rycroft who had already successfully seen through the negotiations that led

to the Teaching Profession For the 21st Century and who was very skilled at sustaining that sort of working ethos which was one of respect for each other, one of looking for positives and one of building on what had already been done.’ [B]

These views perhaps present a counterpoint to the concerns around limited education-related policy expertise within the civil service, in the sense that an effective civil servant requires a skill-set rather than extensive immersion in a particular policy field, although another respondent made an interesting observation on the role of Philip Rycroft in the Review Group, noting that he was:

‘a very, very expert chair and didn’t really have an axe to grind or didn’t have an allegiance to any groups round the table but the downside of that was he didn’t really have a passionate expertise or even commitment to it; there was a kind of dispassionate approach to that’ [C].

In the view of this interviewee, this somewhat neutral style perhaps lacked zeal and specialist knowledge in the context of an attempt at transformational change in education. However in civil service terms, these characteristics might be seen as both worthy and advantageous.

In line with the *Changing to Deliver* process, a number of interviewees who were experienced in the conduct of such groups noted an enhanced role for the Civil Service compared to previous initiatives; this was expressed through the greater visibility of civil servants acting in leadership, briefing and secretariat roles in support of the Review Group, as well as the adoption of a working ethos that had a particularly civil service ‘flavour’. One respondent suggested that an implicit drive appeared ‘that wasn’t always at the committee’s initiative...there were quite often references to the Minister, not in any kind of threatening sense but it was clear that the Minister expects...[C]. While some called for a different approach to the structure and presentation of the final Report, this was rejected from the Executive side:

‘It was going to be a report and it was written in a not dissimilar style to other similar kinds of reports’ [C].

On the civil service side, this process was characterised as trying to achieve:

‘alignment between what the Review Group is saying and where Ministers want to be and you know if that works brilliant. It doesn’t always work and in those circumstances you’ve got to accept that the Minister may want to take things off in a different direction. With the work we did around the curriculum we did, at the end of the day, end up with a really very close coincidence of interest’ [G].

Another conscious strategy deployed on the civil service side was to ensure that:

‘the management of the discussion in the Review Group was very deliberately structured not to allow people to disappear down rabbit holes of detail, of theory, of ideology....there was a real risk that the process would get bogged down very quickly in detail and we know the history of educational reform...to me the risk in this area where there are lots and lots of experts, there's lots of theory, there's lots of debate but if we stayed in that space we would simply get lost in it’ [G].

From the point of view of a relative ‘outside’ this approach meant that the group was ‘often pulled back by the chair whenever we tried to get too detailed’ [C]. As this individual conceded,

‘There wasn’t anything malign about any of this, because it was a very interesting experience and people felt that they all had a chance to have a say, there was no sense that people were being blocked from their contributions not was it an easy consensus, but yes there was a sense that the outcome was always quite clear in Philip Rycroft’s mind, that it would be something fairly short, at quite a high level of generality that would set a kind of framework for work that would come later’ [C].

These insights reveal an approach to the creation of a major policy statement that is very much focussed on a managed congruence of political goals and the views of those

members of the policy community who have been co-opted into the process. This may be consistent with the wider genealogy of CfE in that the broad philosophical agreement had already been generated through the National Debate. It can also be justified in the pragmatic terms described above around the need for focus and clarity. The Ministerial foreword to the Report emphasises that this was merely:

‘...a starting point for a continuous cycle of reflection, review and improvement...’ (SEED, 2004a: p5).

The end result of this managed process was a broad vision that was deliberately lacking in detail. This approach was to my mind rather high-risk as it placed a considerable onus on the next stage of development to retain and communicate that clarity of vision while also being able to translate such a broad sweep into tangible goals and outcomes, in negotiation with the teaching profession in Scotland. This next stage would be managed by a new entity, the Programme Board, which would retain only limited continuity with the process and personnel involved up to that point.

CHAPTER 5 GENEALOGY AND GOVERNANCE OF CfE FROM 2004-2010: FROM VISION TO IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 1 THE PROGRAMME BOARD AND MANAGEMENT BOARD

The next phase in the genealogy of the CfE process spans the period 2004, from the publication of the Review Group Report, up to formal implementation in 2010. The logic of the division between these two phases is based on the clear delineation between the formation of policy and the implementation of policy (see Hill and Hupe, 2002: p. 7). As they suggest, policy decisions are rarely ‘self-executing’; they almost always require some form of implementation (which in turn is worthy of study in its own right). They quote Anderson, (1975: pp.78-79) who notes that:

‘Much that occurs at this [implementation] stage may seem at first glance to be tedious and mundane, yet its consequences for the substance of policy may be quite profound’.

In the case of CfE, this phase was certainly integral to the conduct and outcomes of the overall policy process. The interviews I conducted frequently threw up references to the challenges of translating the initial vision into something that could be implemented. Analysing the development in this way suggests a recognition of the ‘stages’ model of policymaking linked to the idea of a rational policy cycle (see for example Figure 2). In other words, this stage in the development might be understood as following on from the identification of the problem; moving through the identification of responses or solutions; and towards the ‘selection of a policy response’ (Parsons, 1995).

Following the logic and stages of this rational cycle, it would also imply an expectation that later stages in the process would include embedded evaluation and re-evaluation. Moreover, a rational cycle such as this is dependent on very clear identification of goals and associated policy responses. In reviewing the progress of CfE with a number of participants, these stages seem to have unfolded slowly and in a blurred fashion rather than displaying the crisp delineations such a model might prescribe. This lack of purpose and clarity became especially apparent around the next major transition in the process.

The Review Group was dissolved following the launch of their Report. The Programme Board was then established with a remit ‘to advise Ministers and to *steer this programme*’ (SEED, 2006: p3; emphasis added). In particular, the Programme Board was encouraged to take forward the action points from the Ministerial Response (SEED 2004b), rather than simply enacting the conclusions of the Review Group Report (interviewee K). According to one interviewee, the Programme Board also fulfilled the role of ‘external validation’ of the Review Group report [G]. The membership of the Programme Board is listed in the Appendices.

A civil servant explained that the Scottish Executive would naturally retain overall strategic responsibility for such a development:

‘...the setting of the direction for the School Curriculum in Scotland will always be a matter in which the Parliament and Ministers have an interest and a legitimate role in setting the overall direction and the ambitions that we have for schools in Scotland...so that role of oversight was a very natural one for the Executive and one that was, and is undisputed’ [G]

The clarity expressed in the remit and in statements such as the one above appears to be at odds with some of the confusion felt by other participants in this phase of the development. Two members of the newly constituted Programme Board whom I interviewed recalled a lack of clarity about the precise status of the group, capturing the confusion between an advisory role and the explicit steering role described in the formal statement from SEED above:

‘Certainly at the time if you had asked me I would have said it is essentially, primarily an advisory group; it is the Executive and over time LTS and some of the other agencies that were actually doing it. We were trying to maintain strategic oversight...we weren’t organised to micromanage [the CfE development]. We were really organised to ask hopefully appropriate questions,

to push in appropriate directions, make sure things got on the agenda and the like but it wasn't the kind of project management that came in later on' [K].

'There was a lack of clarity about what the Programme Board were doing, where real authority lay, whether policy decisions would be made...we hadn't defined properly in the end all the things that needed to be done. Just to be given a document with a set of principles and not create the architecture for what comes next didn't help. So then it left the Programme Board floundering about what they should actually be doing.' [J]

One of the possible consequences of a lack of direction was highlighted by this respondent in relation to prior experience of policy and curriculum development:

'My main concern...was that there is a big danger that you can have a group and I think it happened with Higher Still – you can have a group that has the oversight of what you might call the operational side but it lacks a capacity for strategic understanding and strategic planning, in other words it is very good at making sure that the bits of the policy get carried out to a timescale but they might actually lose sight of what it is that the policy is trying to achieve' [K].

McCaig (2003: p. 475) describes the 'confusion about lines of accountability when quangos are placed between policy making and service delivery'. In this case he was describing the inter-institutional context that lay behind the SQA crisis in 2000, however it seems that a similar dynamic remained evident by the time of the CfE development.

This confusion around purpose, together with the limited scope of tangible recommendations arising from the Review Group Report seem to have had an impact on both the genealogy and governance of the CfE process during this crucial phase. While this was presented in a different light at the time, the subsequent dissolution of the Programme Board and the appointment of a new Management Board in 2008 appears to have reflected high level frustration at the pace and direction of developments during this period. Another body, the Management Group, had also been established to oversee the

Programme Board. This Group had high level representation from the four key ‘partnership’ bodies, namely, the Scottish Government, HMIE, LTS and SQA. As one Programme Board member put it:

‘What happened essentially was that we had a Management Board placed over us and although this was never very explicitly stated, our remit effectively got narrowed so we were focussing much more clearly on the curriculum in the rather narrower sense of experiences and outcomes rather than the wider strategic focus which included all of the assessment and qualifications and other things that were going on as well’ [K].

Some of the growing concern about the process at this point in time is captured by the same Programme Board member:

‘...we kept on trying to impress upon initially the Executive and then the Government (from 2007) that you need to make sure this joins up, this is a holistic reform process, it is not something that could be narrowly project managed in the way that you set objectives and you focus narrowly on those objectives. It is very much part of a wider, cultural change it’s going to embrace lots of other things, make sure things join up’ [K].

The proliferation in management structures over this period is captured in Figure 6 below. One respondent suggested that much of this governance structure was created on a reactive, ad hoc basis [J], rather than as a systematic, planned process.

Figure 6 CfE Policy Management Structures 2004-2010



The wider transition process in governance from what might be termed a ‘visionary group’ to a differently constituted implementation or delivery body appears to be a recurring pattern in policy development in Scotland. It has been identified elsewhere in relation to in the development of Higher Still, where a Strategy Group was superseded by an Implementation Group in 1997 (Raffe et al, 2002: p172), and in the *Improving Our Schools* consultation exercise in 1999 (Humes, 2003: p82). There may be a strong rationale for such a pattern of project management, however it is rarely articulated, and it leaves such processes open to an interpretation that valuable opportunities for continuity and progression are sometimes lost during longer term developments.

According to one member of the Review Group who did not continue working on the Programme Board, a number of them anticipated that the transition from visionary Report to operational practices required careful consideration:

‘I suppose one of the things that many of us kept hammering about this document was that it was a principles document, it wasn’t a kind of principles into practice document and that a lot of people would find it rather disappointing and empty because it was kind of up here and teachers and others were looking for

something much more detailed and prescriptive and so I think there was a general consensus that there needed to be a new stage' [C].

This individual offered to stay on for the next stage but this offer was politely declined. During this period of transition and reorganisation, a number of important developmental steps took place in the evolution of the CfE policy. One significant development (in terms of the policy process more than its impact on the development) was the decision to group different parts of the existing curriculum into eight broad 'subject areas'. The background and rationale for this decision was described by different respondents in quite different terms. One suggested that they were developed in order not to 'frighten the profession too much' [B]. Another stated that while understandable from the point of view of seeking to build support among subject associations for the wider proposals:

'I think the Review Group would have felt that that was the wrong way to go' [E]

Another thought that with the emphasis on subject areas, you will:

'inevitably find, particularly in the secondary schools, that...until you get people that are comfortable with what is proposed in their own subject areas, getting them to [work in more interdisciplinary ways] in the secondary, I don't think will happen across the majority of teachers' [F].

According to this respondent, the original goal of 'decluttering' the curriculum [an issue that had emerged from teachers during the National Debate around an 'overcrowded curriculum] was also undermined by the early focus on subject groups. Another noted that the subject areas were initially introduced as:

'...convenient organising categories...at the time it doesn't come through as really highly contested and debated issue. Certainly it came with hindsight there were all sorts of things that we did wrong; we did not go through a serious sustained process of trying to work out why we did it that way, what the rationale was for fixing on those areas' [K].

One of the interesting themes that emerges from my interviews is that, when it comes to relatively contested terrain such as the establishment of the subject areas, the defence of

these elements seems to come almost exclusively from those who might be deemed ‘insiders’, that is, representatives of one of the four Partner organisations. For example, a number of such interviewees mounted a robust defence of the formation of subject areas:

‘you need to stick them [curriculum organisers] under some kind of heading, you can’t just have a great big pot full of expectations for youngsters and they do naturally fall into certain headings’ [N].

Similarly, another stated that ‘we need to think about the capacities but we're not dumping subjects’ [G]. Another ‘insider’ respondent [H] provided a number of justifications for the subject areas, including the ‘need to start with something’; the desire to ‘avoid frightening teachers’ and to be non-threatening, (which this interviewee articulated as a more effective model of change in education); and the need for a pragmatic approach that builds upon existing structures and the training framework.

One respondent supported the principle of establishing the subject areas, but bemoaned the lack of coherence and consistency once the Subject Groups began to take forward the process of elaborating the detailed curriculum outcomes and experiences under the different headings:

‘Where is our guidance? What is our reference point? Where are the instructions? And what you then had was each of the subject groups came up with a different language’ [J].

The perspectives I have captured from participants suggests that there was indeed some confusion and a lack of clarity and continuity during this phase. The sense of drift in the process, and the election of a minority SNP administration in May 2007, seemed to prompt a further change to the governance of CfE. In 2008 the Management Board was created with the stated purpose to:

1. Ensure effective development and implementation of the programme
2. Give collective advice (as the bodies responsible for delivery) to the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning on CfE.

The scale and breadth of representation on the Management Board represented a significant shift in the nature of the development programme (see Appendices for the Membership list at the time of the inaugural meeting).

One participant in the Management Board suggested that it was:

‘necessarily more concerned with making sure things got done, keeping the momentum... a response to the perception that CfE was dragging its feet and things weren’t happening... that it needs to be project managed in that sense and I think that the big tension which certainly does come through quite a lot I think throughout the process was the tension between ... trying to maintain a more informal model of engagement – a two way model of engagement with the need to have that more formal, traditional model of governance, partly for traditional accountability and political reasons but also to reassure politicians and others that the project was on track and that we weren’t dragging our feet, that things were being done to an appropriate timescale’ [N]

This extended quote is retained because it represents, from an ‘insider’ perspective a clear articulation of one of the major themes in this study: that is the paradox of contemporary approaches to policymaking between on the one hand, consultative approaches; and on the other, the need for meaningful change driven from the centre. I will return to this central tension in my conclusions and recommendations.

The task described above, of maintaining the broad vision and the commitment to engagement, while translating this into practice, fell primarily to the four Partner organisations. In the next section I will describe them in turn and explore their role in this process.

CHAPTER FIVE

SECTION 2: THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In this section I will provide a brief account of the strategic partnership for CfE implementation; namely LTS, HMIE, the Scottish Executive/Scottish Government, and the SQA. These organisations are presented below in alphabetical order in order to avoid any inference of a natural hierarchy (although perceptions around the apparent balance of power between these institutions will be an issue I will return to later in this dissertation).

Having summarised their status and roles in the CfE process in Table 3 below, I will present a discussion of the views of the policy participants on how the inter-institutional dynamic played out in the context of the CfE development. I will focus especially on the inter-related roles of HMIE and the Scottish Government, as these emerged as the most contested aspects in my interviews and have historically been regarded as the two most powerful policy institutions; although I will also consider the capacity of LTS to drive forward developments, and the more marginal role played by SQA, certainly in the period from 2004 to around 2008.

Table 3 The Four Partners in Summary

	HMIE	LTS	Scottish Government/Scottish Executive	SQA
Status	Executive Agency	NDPB/Quango	Government/Executive	NDPB/Quango
Role	Advisory	Curriculum Development/ Implementation	Lead responsibility; reporting to Ministers; accountable to Parliament	Qualifications development (later in the process)

I will begin my focus on the different Partners with an account of the status and role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) at the time of the inception of CfE. HMIE has long been recognised as a particularly powerful organisation in Scottish education, and it remains controversial. From the time of their formation in the mid 19th Century the Inspectorate has had to navigate the tension 'between control and assistance' (Weir, 2008: p. 142), with a teaching profession that continues to view them as 'agents of the state rather than allies of the teachers' (Weir, 2008: p. 143). At various points in history the Inspectorate has endeavoured to alter this perception, and indeed some commentators in the past have provided a positive view of their contemporary role. Mackintosh (1962: p. 91) believed that:

'No longer are the inspectors regarded as remote administrators, or as spies in the classroom, but as members of an organisation anxious to help and not hinder the course of education.'

Similarly, Hunter (1971: p. 33) marks:

'...a welcome tendency for inspectors to regard themselves nowadays-and to be viewed by teachers-more in the role of consultants and advisers'.

Humes (1986) provided a more critical appraisal of the role and status of HMIE, seeking to challenge some of the 'claims about the value and quality of the contribution made by HMIs' (Humes, 1986: p.61). He suggested that their own publications and procedures did not always meet the high standards that they would expect of others. He advocated a shift towards a system more focussed on self-evaluation, which has indeed emerged in subsequent years. Humes suggested (1986: p. 65) that:

'the successful HMI is one who learns to conduct himself according to the bureaucratic conventions of the civil service. Discretion and confidentiality are particularly important elements of the approved model'.

Humes also claimed that HMIE were very sensitive to any external criticism. In the Leadership Class (pp. 70-71) he described the difficulties experienced by a Head Teacher in the early 1980s who had raised concerns about aspects of the Inspectorate in a series of articles.

In the more recent period HMIE had come under sustained criticism in the period immediately after the SQA crisis of 2000, having been characterised as fulfilling mutually incompatible roles of promoters and arbiters of curriculum change. The impact of these events was felt widely, and had greater prominence, in the post-devolution context of policymaking, with the responses of both Parliament and Executive unfolding in the new landscape of greater openness and accountability. The fallout from this led to a major shift in the role of HMIE. The Education, Culture and Sport Committee Enquiry had made a number of recommendations (in Figure 7 below) that are worth listing in some detail as their context and impact relate clearly to both themes in this study of genealogy and governance.

Figure 7 ECS Committee Recommendations on the Role of HMIE

“27. There should be a review of the role and accountability of HMI. Their role should be more transparent and any conflict between the duties of inspection of educational research, and of acting as assessors for and advisers to the Scottish Executive should be explored and resolved

So many sectors of the Scottish education community voiced their concern to the Committee that there was conflict in the roles of the Inspectorate as controllers of the Higher Still Development and evaluators of its success that it is essential their role be redefined.

28. The Scottish Executive must ensure that future educational developments should involve and be overseen by all those concerned

As the corollary to the previous recommendation it is important that educational developments should no longer be under the control of HMI. They should act solely as the quality assurance agency for such developments.”

Education, Culture and Sport Committee (2000)

Their role had therefore been redefined, from playing ‘a dual role as educational policymakers and as the body which evaluated its own policies in practice’ (Raffe, 2000:

p168), to one where it should revert to its original focus on the inspections process (although, crucially, retaining the professional advisory role, as I will describe below). This shift was signaled by the then Education Minister, Jack McConnell, in 2000 who stated that:

‘...the Inspectorate should no longer have the lead role in the development and implementation of new policies for the curriculum’ (Scottish Executive Press Release, 23.11.2000: online).

One respondent described how these changes had disrupted historic relationships between Inspectors and their cognate civil service counterparts. In the absence of these relationships, the civil servants lacked professional advice and input. This was gradually re-established in the period of time after 2000, but this rapprochement had been further disrupted by having to start again with each new civil service appointee leading to a constant renegotiation of boundaries. Instead of seeking professional advice from the Inspectorate they relied on intuitive or common sense approaches instead [O]. According to this interviewee, this had a (negative) material impact on CfE developments.

The Civil Service had primary responsibility for the delivery of policy, both as a result of the new status of HMIE, but also because of their own internal processes of change under the *Changing to Deliver* programme. However in practice HMIE had retained a significant policy role, albeit in its advisory capacity, with the Senior Chief Inspector being the ‘Chief Professional Advisor’ to Government. This advisory role manifested in a number of key applications in the CfE process: they were represented on all of the main governance groups; they played a significant role in the establishment of the Subject Groups [interviewees, F, K] thanks to their ready access to practitioners; and perhaps most importantly, they filled the gap in detailed curriculum policy, practice and pedagogical knowledge that some of the civil servants did not possess themselves. A number of the senior figures who were brought in to lead or support developments, whether based within SEED or LTS, or sometimes straddling both, were also recruited or seconded from HMIE. As one interviewee put it:

‘It was certainly my impression that they [HMIE] were the most knowledgeable people...for this kind of change especially you need some source of expertise or continuity of expertise especially which the civil service tend not to be able to supply and LTS wasn’t really equipped to supply it, SQA wasn’t really across all the levels either so HMIE that was their natural role and I think that gave it a lot of influence over the process’ [K].

It was suggested by another interviewee [O] that civil servants did not always seek the professional expertise and advice within HMIE that might have been available to them. In this view, the failure to seek good advice might explain some of the apparent issues around the development of CfE. It should be noted that Civil Servants interviewed in the course of my research [D, G] offered different views of these issues, while other categories of respondents and stakeholders expressed general scepticism about the role of both HMIE and the Civil Service as the groups most qualified to lead policy development [J, M]. These sometimes conflicting accounts of the same governance processes suggest that there are clear fault lines between the perspectives among civil servants, HMIE and other key organisational representatives.

Learning And Teaching Scotland (LTS) was formed through the merger of the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum with the Scottish Council for Educational Technology in 2000, creating a new Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). Its principle responsibilities lay in curriculum development and support, as well as the promotion of effective educational technologies in schools. One interviewee stated that, in relation to the CfE development, the role of LTS:

‘would be to feed in best advice possible on the direction of travel across the development as a whole based on professional knowledge and very importantly, based on a lot of interaction with a lot of people...The other aspect of it would be to combine that with knowledge about research as a job and making sure that research and intelligence is used in the best possible way’ [N].

Another respondent indicated that LTS had received the:

‘clear messages that were coming out about supporting Scottish education, supporting people to develop the curriculum appropriately to the benefits of young people’ [H].

The clarity of purpose conveyed in these very positive statements are somewhat at odds with one respondent who suggested that it was:

‘not very clear exactly what their role is, how they interact with universities, local authorities and so on and you’ve got a big organisation here which I think in a sense doesn’t really punch its weight; it hasn’t taken any kind of strategic view of CfE but seems to be immersing itself in small, albeit often very positive initiatives like AiFL or whatever, that kind of thing’ [B].

Another was surprised at how ‘low key in a sense the LTS role was to begin with’ [K].

In terms of the formalised role within the Partnership, I was told that LTS were commissioned to lead the CfE programme management, although they were not fully funded for this. Their methodology involved aspects of governance and quality assurance structures, and for the engagement and trialling strand, LTS had collective and operational responsibility, and were accountable to the other partners. LTS had a number of specific ‘workstreams’ in relation to CfE, including:

- initial engagement with teachers
- employing seconded practitioners charged with writing and testing around new curriculum outcomes.
- Technological aspects of implementation and development [H].

This relatively clear set of objectives was complicated by the apparently high turnover of staff amongst the development teams. One respondent indicated that this was a particular area of concern around the delivery of a national development on this scale:

‘when it is so dependent on seconded staff who can be withdrawn...as and when needed... There were a lot of Development Officers moving on – sometimes entire teams going and being replaced’ [F]

A broader concern expressed by one interviewee was that, whereas in the past the SCCC had a reputation for nurturing talent, in the absence of a prominent policy role, LTS staff spent more of their time ‘writing teaching materials rather than policy documents’ [J].

The Scottish Executive and its civil servants had formal lead responsibility for the development of CfE, although one respondent freely acknowledged their ‘interactions with the other bodies’ [N]. As I suggested previously, the role of Government and certainly the civil service dimension is likely to be the least well understood or known about among the teaching profession. With regard to the different nodes of power around education policy in Scotland, the government branch has arguably the strongest claim on direct legitimacy (deriving as it does from electoral outcomes) yet retains the lowest visibility of all the major policy bodies.

The first five years or so after devolution in 1999 saw the ‘normalisation of devolved governance in Scotland’ (Bradbury & Mitchell, 2005: p301). However that period of normalisation had undoubtedly required a period of adjustment to the civil service within the Scottish Executive [as was in 2004]. Some commentators believed that devolution would lead to increasing divergence of culture and practice from the UK/’Whitehall’ model (Rhodes, 2000, p154; Richards and Smith, 2002, p257). This view perhaps understated the process of divergence that had begun long before 1999, indeed going back decades.

Interestingly, even in the post-devolution era, the opportunities for mobility between the different ‘Home’ Civil Service Departments across the UK have persisted. Some suggest that the civil service in Scotland in fact remains culturally and operationally attuned to Whitehall (Ford & Casebow, 2002: pp. 50-51), while others have asserted the distinctiveness of the Scottish civil service (Housden, 2011; Interviewee D).

Within the Partnership, the Scottish Executive acted as the central point of responsibility in the system, devolving certain tasks to the other three Partners. As one civil servant put it to me:

‘...It is inconceivable that we should have such a major change in the curriculum without involving those three bodies (SQA, LTS and HMIE] in particular directly. We couldn’t hope to have success in pushing forward the changes in the curriculum without the curriculum body, the qualifications body and the inspection body being involved in the process so there is an element of establishing common ground there. It is quite difficult to reflect now on how we went about building that partnership’ [D]

The role of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in the CfE process is closely associated with the fluctuating prominence of qualifications and assessment issues over the course of the development. At an early point in the genealogy of CfE, a decision was made to set aside the detailed implications for the certification agenda. This led, if not to the marginalisation of SQA,

‘a lack of clarity about what you wanted them to do and there was an anxiety about assessment getting too much prominence in the whole area’ [J].

Another interviewee suggested that, certainly at the outset, ‘SQA’s formal position wasn’t so great, it wasn’t primarily SQA’s province’ [K].

Again there is a contrast in perceptions between external participants and those closer to the centre, where the emphasis is much more positive and inclusive:

‘I think their [SQA’s] involvement is absolutely fundamental and both Chief Executives have made that very clear in their time, that this is a coherent development right across assessment, qualifications and the curriculum and that public commitment is very important...At a practical level and in terms of the development work that we have been doing, we have been very careful to make sure that we have had SQA colleagues involved as far as we can in developing the thinking around each of the curriculum areas ’ [N].

Another ‘insider’ noted that SQA:

‘...interest and involvement in the programme is going to develop to a greater extent towards the end of the process and that is what we are seeing right now’ [D]

These positive assertions about effective partnership working provide a particular narrative account of the genealogy of this phase in the CfE process. However the issues around reform of assessment and qualifications in the light of CfE ought not to be seen as mere abstract components of a narrative; the consequences of the contested attitudes towards the place of assessment proved to have a significant impact on the development thereafter.

A number of interviewees suggested that the ‘backwash effects of qualifications ought to have been on the agenda a bit earlier on’ [K] and this was identified as a significant strategic error in the overall process [J].

‘One of the things that someone said in reducing [SQA’s] role and their profile in this process was to keep the assessment in check but one of the consequences was that one of the dimensions of the whole work of CfE is that the assessment part of it is ill-conceived, it’s just not thought through well enough...They should have done that at the beginning [addressed the qualifications issues]. They should have reconfigured the work plan and said let’s get some things in place. It was great having capacities, but capacities without structure for outcomes were leaving the capacities in a vacuum’ [J].

A member of the Review Group indicated that this had been anticipated from the outset within the Group, and that there was a clear sense that:

‘assessment is going to have an absolutely dominant influence on what happens in schools so we have to get this right and assessment reform has to go alongside curriculum reform’ [E]

Despite these concerns being raised, this interviewee suggested that:

‘somehow people were unwilling to grasp the nettle of assessment and one can see why; I mean politically it’s a very, very risky thing to start to muck about with the qualifications system so I certainly kept making the point [in the Review Group] and other people did too.’ [E]

Interviewee H stopped short of suggesting that the overall strategy had been faulty however conceded that an earlier focus in the process on qualifications and assessment would have been preferable. An alternative strategy might have been to pursue a phased approach in which the Capacities and Principles could have been formally enacted in the primary sector more or less from the outset, prior to commencement of change in the secondary sector, with the thornier issues around assessment postponed. One respondent certainly felt this had been a possible alternative [J]. However it is difficult to imagine this happening for a number of reasons, including the considerable political desire for momentum; the logistical difficulties relating to the emergence of possibly asymmetric arrangements and pedagogical philosophies in the primary and secondary sectors. It is interesting to note however that, while such a twin track approach might have been impossible in a political sense, anecdotally at least, this phased approach has emerged as a *de facto* reality in many schools, with primary schools tending to be quicker to adapt [EIS, 2009].

With regard to the sequencing of events around assessment and qualifications, I have illustrated both the actual chain of events and an alternative route that might have ultimately been a more logical and effective process, in Figures 8 & 9 below.

Figure 8 Actual sequence of policy process

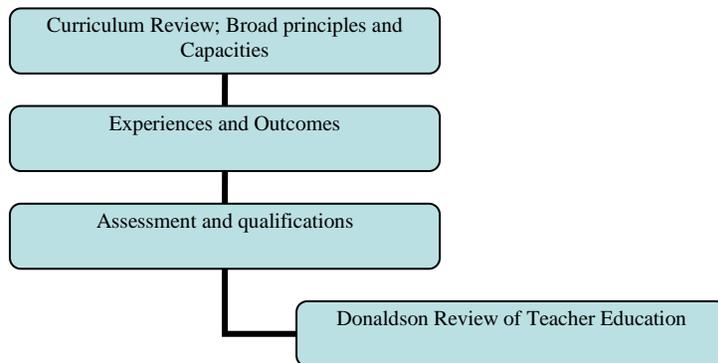
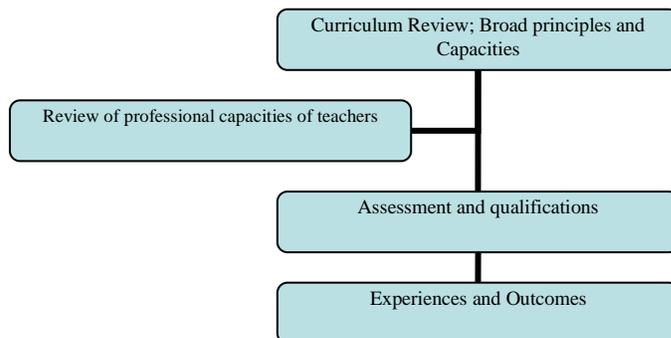


Figure 9 Alternative model of policy process



In each model I have included the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education, as this is explicitly linked to the post-CfE landscape. What I have suggested here is that assuming one starts with a broad vision of the purposes of the curriculum, the next stage ought to have been a review of the professional capacity of teachers to undertake the possibly radical changes to their professional practice, knowledge and even identity implied by the Curriculum Review. Having gone through this process (which would have taken some time), it might then have been possible to review that nature of assessment and qualifications in partnership with a profession that felt empowered to make the necessary curriculum and pedagogical changes, in the secure knowledge that the qualifications

would be presented and evaluated in ways that supported the new pedagogy. While this is offered simply as an illustration of what might have been done differently in the process (and it carries its own flaws and risks), it nonetheless shows that if one steps back from the process it is sometimes possible to envisage alternatives; this opportunity did not really emerge in the policy process around CfE, despite the commitment to consultation and engagement that I will describe in detail in the next Chapter.

One of the ‘insider’ respondents acknowledged the challenges of how best to bring about the desired outcomes:

‘It’s always difficult to know what more we might have done...we’re not *just* introducing new qualifications, we are not *just* thinking the primary curriculum, we are not *just* changing assessment and the assessment regime, we are doing all of these things and that has implications for the way that we train new teachers and the way that we provide CPD for existing teachers...it seems to me that there is a real conundrum and maybe we could have put more effort in to explaining that conundrum than we have done but we didn’t know better ourselves until you’re in the midst of it. And you could see that other things were going to be necessary but you don’t know where they’re going to go until you start working on them.’[D]

I have included this extended quotation (albeit with some elision) in order to demonstrate that while any number of criticisms might be levelled at particular strategic choices made in a development on the scale of CfE, it is important to acknowledge that some of the individuals who have responsibility for developments are not unaware of the imperfections in their decisions and tactical approaches. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it seems to me that, in the light of the different dimensions to change suggested by Interviewee D above, and that have indeed come to pass in many respects, there was a perhaps more logical sequence to the major strategic components in the period after the Review Group report in 2004. I will describe this alternative model in Chapter Six.

With regard to the inter-institutional dimensions to the Partnership, conflicting accounts again emerged in my research. Table 4 below is based on my coding and analysis of my interviews with the different policy actors. See Chapter Three, Section 3 for an explanation of the values in this and other similar Tables. In this instance, I interpreted their responses to my questions around the effectiveness of the strategic Partnership of HMIE, LTS, Scottish Government and SQA. What emerges is that, as is the case in a number of my analyses, the ‘insider’ respondents most closely associated with the Partnership tended to present a positive picture, while the ‘outside’ respondents were less positive (I will return to this pattern later in the study). In this instance, though, three respondents who might be viewed as ‘insiders’ also provided comment that overall I judged to be negative. This suggests that there were indeed some misgivings about the governance of this phase of the development.

Table 4 Interviewee disposition towards the effectiveness of the Partnership

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Partnership	-	0	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	?	+	-	-2

With regard to the narrative accounts that emerged from my interviews, there were a range of perspectives and recollections. Some respondents were relating their experiences from within a particular organisational context, while others were external observers of the Partnership.

One interviewee [A] suggested that the formal operational dimensions to the Partnership did not always work effectively, especially in relation to communications. On the other hand the informal relationships that were happening between partner organisations proved in this view to be effective and collaborative. The examples of effective working between different teams from the different organisations included:

‘the relationship between the Professional Advisers in the Scottish Executive and eventually the Scottish Government, the Engagement Team in LTS, the Area Advisers in LTS and contributors from the HMIE...All of them pulled together’.

[A]

However the same respondent raised a concern that at a more fundamental level, the Partnership was not equal:

‘a naive interpretation of that would be that there would be four equal partners all contributing to the development. You know I think you have got to realise that that wasn’t how the partnership operated and indeed the concept of the partnership is one that could possibly be successfully challenged because the relationships were not relationships that I necessarily understand as a partnership’ [A].

A civil servant acknowledged that tensions might be inevitable across the Partnership:

‘because they have a different focus and inevitably there is that push for independence if you like and yet there is a need for them to be involved fully in the policy process...Managing those tensions is simply a question of regular meetings and regular understandings and occasionally trying to put right some of the things that go slightly awry. There haven’t been too many of those I don’t think’. [D].

Similar tensions were identified by another respondent:

‘once the principles were done, momentum thereafter was very, very difficult because there was a lack of clarity about who was doing what and LTS were ill-equipped to do it, HMI wanted to keep a handle on it, so there was tensions there about who was doing what...’ [J].

One respondent suggested that in some respects, the Higher Still development process:

‘had a much more clear structure in terms of how it was being organised, delivered and a greater consistency of personnel...it was a much clearer structure...[F]

However this criticism was balanced by a recognition by the same respondent that:

‘[CfE] is a much more partnership devolved approach to it than may be Higher Still was.’ [F]

The particular place of HMIE in the policy architecture (and its impact on the other Partners) around CfE was raised as a matter of concern by a number of respondents. One suggested that in many respects, knowledge is power:

‘the Inspectorate’s power lay at least partly through the fact that it did have this control of information about the professional knowledge, knowledge about contacts and so forth’ [K].

Another addressed the idea that HMIE have substantially recuperated their pre-2000 position at the heart of policymaking:

‘one of the consequences of HMIE being out the policy loop has been that the civil servants of course have been floundering because they don’t know and they are not education professionals as you know and there has been a great churn of civil servants and so HMIE provide a terrific amount of stability in the system and of course is a very skilful operator. *HMIE are now to my way of thinking, right back into policy development*’ [E: *emphasis added*]

This issue was also picked up by another respondent:

‘The one I’m not absolutely clear on is HMIE’s role in everything because as you know post Higher Still, the notion was that they would come out of the policy side altogether; they would be focussing on inspection and would be separate after the initial debacle [The SQA Examinations crisis in 2000]... It certainly seems to me that this has now been turned around and they are now very much back in the policy framework because there is involvement there at all levels’. [F]

The overall picture that emerges here, then, is one of some positive aspects of partnership operating alongside concerns about the lack of clarity in role definition between the different partner organisations charged with delivering such a major change in Scottish

education. Some concerns were raised about the apparent imbalance in power between the different organisations. In particular, SQA and LTS lacked sufficient direct influence. HMIE's role was viewed with suspicion in some instances as suggested above. It was also implied by some that certain aspects of the governance structures put in place to support CfE have ultimately had a negative impact on the course of the development. In the next Chapter I will bring these issues together in greater depth in order to answer the core questions of whether CfE provides evidence of a different approach to post-devolution policymaking, and whether the policy architecture is fit for purpose.

CHAPTER SIX WHAT DOES CfE REVEAL ABOUT POST-DEVOLUTION POLICYMAKING AND THE POLICY ARCHITECTURE?

SECTION 1 POST-DEVOLUTION POLICYMAKING

One commentator has noted that the governance of educational policy making in post-devolution Scotland can be ‘a complex, and at times, a perplexing socio-political activity’ (Donn, 2003: p121). In this study I have tried to penetrate aspects of this complexity by applying an external analytical framework and by investigating some of the internal machinery of policymaking. It is true that what has emerged is indeed complex and difficult to characterise or define clearly. In Chapters Two, Four and Five I sought to address one of my core questions, namely the extent to which the genealogy of *A Curriculum for Excellence* was influenced and shaped by the post-devolutionary context. In this Chapter I resolve (perhaps tentatively given the limitations of the scope of investigation discussed in Chapters 1-3) the two remaining underpinning areas of investigation, namely: whether the governance of *A Curriculum for Excellence* provides evidence of a change in post-devolution policymaking in education; and whether it is possible to construct a schematic of the policymaking architecture in post-devolution Scotland.

Having delved behind the public facing aspects of the CfE development, the process has proven to be as intricate and contingent as might be expected of any such undertaking. However one of the issues that I address in this Chapter is whether the complexities and undoubted difficulties in the development of CfE are simply to be expected in the ‘real world’ of descriptive policy analysis. Or did the advent of devolution facilitate a qualitative, once-in-a-generation shift that improved and enhanced policy procedures as had been anticipated? Alternatively, and of greater concern, is it the case that the fundamental governance structures of Scottish education remain configured in such a way that serious problems were bound to emerge in such an ambitious project as CfE?

It is certainly the case that in the post-devolution period Scottish education has undertaken a number of high profile initiatives that have in some way been less effective than intended, such as the qualifications reforms that led to the SQA Exams crisis of 2000 (Raffe et al, 2002, McCaig, 2003, Richardson, 2007) [although the roots of this crisis can be traced to the pre-devolution era]; the failure of the McCrone Agreement to set adequate benchmarks or goals (Audit Scotland, 2006); the recent demise of the Chartered Teacher Programme; and the erosion of aspects of the Teacher Induction Scheme. While each situation is clearly unique, and one has to bear in mind the economic and financial context of recent developments, it may be that there are underlying structural issues that deserve closer attention. As Lindblom noted:

‘Policy is not made once and for all; it is made and re-made endlessly. Policy-making is a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under reconsideration’ (1959: p.86).

As I made clear at the outset of this study, I had no desire to focus on a deficit model of interpreting the implementation of CfE. Nonetheless in the context of this Chapter it is perhaps appropriate to offer some thoughts on what factors can lead to the failure (complete or partial) of a particular policy process. I feel I should reiterate that this is not to predetermine the ultimate outcome of CfE. Rather, such a framework might help to examine the potential areas of ongoing concern for what remains a high profile policy vision for Scottish education.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984: p. 197) distinguish between *non-implementation* and *unsuccessful implementation*. In the former,

‘a policy is not put into effect as intended, perhaps because those involved in its execution have been uncooperative and/or inefficient, or because their best efforts could not overcome obstacles to effective implementation over which they had little or no control. Unsuccessful implementation, on the other hand, occurs when a policy is carried out in full, and external circumstances are not unfavourable but, none the less, the policy fails to produce the intended results (or outcomes)’.

In a similar fashion, Stasz and Wright (2007: pp. 166-167) suggest three reasons that policies sometimes fail:

1. The initial ‘problem may have been misdiagnosed’;
2. There is a mismatch between the policy problem and the policy instrument (which might be a mandate, an inducement, a capacity-building exercise, or a systems-change around the transfer of power or responsibility, etc.)
3. Inconsistency in problem definition amongst policy actors and government arising from fragmented and decentralised educational systems.

As I proceed through this synthesis of the various significant dimensions to the CfE process I analysed, some resonances may appear with aspects of the above. Each section incorporates elements of genealogical and governance analysis, with the aim of justifying the recommendations that follow in Chapter Seven. It is of course relatively easy to critique a development but much more difficult to suggest alternative strategies that might have been more effective (moving from the *descriptive* to the *prescriptive*). Notwithstanding certain recommendations are offered in the final Chapter that may contribute to the debate around policy development in Scotland.

It seems that the immediate context of devolution, and the longer term genealogy of educational policymaking in Scotland, were both significant formative influences on the *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE) development. In some respects, devolution addressed one of the major concerns around the governance of Scottish education in the pre-devolution era, articulate in this rhetorical question from Paterson (2000a: p.7):

‘Could a system of government dominated by civil servants and selected professional advisers rather than indigenous elections ever be enough to respond to popular pressures for social justice through education?’

The advent of devolution, together with its ‘indigenous elections’, certainly carried the hope that the previous technocratic and centralised control of education in Scotland would be overturned. The powerful civic impetus that drove the momentum for

devolution demanded a change to the geographical remoteness of decision-making (in Westminster) and to the sense of remoteness of policymaking from scrutiny, accountability and active participation.

Some of the new policy architecture of devolution was pressed into service very quickly after 1999 in response to events such as the SQA crisis. One of the first major Acts passed by the new Parliament related to education (The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, 2000) which was informed by a large scale consultation exercise (Humes, 2008: p. 72), and went through all the stages of pre-legislative scrutiny, review by Committee, and the other stages as recommended in the CSG Report.

These early events in the immediate post-devolution period did indeed seem to provide grounds for cautious optimism that the notion of a 'new politics' had not been a naïve dream. The Permanent Secretary (the most senior civil servant) at the Scottish Government at the time of writing is certainly positive about the nature of policy in Scotland, having transferred from Whitehall. He indicated in an interview in early 2011 that:

‘One of the most attractive things about this place is the very open culture which is apparent in its politics and Holyrood has a very different feel to Westminster...and in public life in general, people say what they mean and it is a less stilted conversation in general’ (Housden, 2011).

With regard to educational policymaking, the majority of interviewees expressed a positive view of the wider ethos in the post devolution era. Interviewee C, for example, noted a difference in terms of policy content due to no longer having to worry about possible implications or ramifications for the wider UK educational system. There was also a stronger sense of 'Scottishness' while at the same time a greater willingness to look further afield for international policy learning. These considerations permeated the thinking of the Review Group:

‘we were genuinely looking at our own needs and our own traditions although it wasn't always said as openly as that but there was no real sense that we were

going to be affected or dictated to by anyone else in the United Kingdom which was a small change in some respects but may be a big one in another way. There wasn't really any overt reference to it being post-devolution it was more kind of assumed that the National Debate was a Scottish National Debate' [C].

Another respondent was able to compare and contrast the experience of participation in CfE with other previous initiatives, suggesting that it felt different:

'...because I can contrast it with the contribution I made to developing particular guidelines.....So I think this is a much more open and therefore potentially more effective process' [B].

The proximity and direct engagement of elected officials in the policy process (and the increased visibility and scrutiny that goes along with this) was highlighted by a number of respondents:

'it is very clear that under devolution we have got Ministers who are very interested in offering detail and for whom these are a big part of their lives so they are pretty interested and actively engaged in what is going on' [N].

Another picked up on:

'...a new political sense was that there was greater political oversight of what was going on than there would have been before we had a devolved Parliament, because you had much more direct access to politicians of all parties and particularly of course to Ministers...the setting up of the Parliament and the way the Parliament operated it had an obligation to consult and I think the politicians have genuinely tried to do that' [E].

This backdrop was also noted by another respondent:

'I do think the CfE [process] is more open and they are certainly more aware of the fact that they are going to be subjected to scrutiny...but they are certainly quite keen to be seen to be doing things in a way that if they are held to account they can justify whatever cause of action they have taken.... They are very

conscious about doing it in such a way that they can justify that actions were taken so folks just can't come and say well you were always going to do that anyway' [F].

Another described how the ideological dislocation that had been evident in the past was no longer such an issue:

'I think there certainly has been a change....when...Michael Forsyth arrived, the world just changed and it changed beyond recognition because...here was a right wing, ideological politician who was not going to let the profession take control of curriculum decision making and so on....there was a seismic change round about that particular time in the mid 1980s' [C].

With regard to the particular approaches adopted in the CfE policy process, there were mostly very positive views about the emphasis on consultation and engagement, and the 'intense engagement of stakeholders and practitioners' [G]. Another interviewee characterised the engagement process as something:

'which was very fluid and it was changing as policy was changing and the momentum for Curriculum for Excellence was increasing' [A].

One respondent made especially positive claims about the efficacy and impact of the commitment to consultation and engagement:

'...there has been a multi-layered, complex approach to the involvement of the profession which was promised at the beginning and which has now come through all of this way'. [L].

Some of the official documentation published in support of the CfE developments also made strong claims of a different approach to change; moving away from a model based on:

'central guidelines, cascade models of staff development and the provision of resources to support the implementation of guidance by teachers...[by aiming

to]...engage teachers in thinking from first principles about their educational aims and values and their classroom practice’ (SEED: 2006).

A respondent from an ‘outsider’ perspective made it clear that the ambition towards engagement was genuine and that it exercised the deliberations of the Programme Board in their twin goals of engaging with sufficient informality, while at the same time ‘made sure that things can keep moving ahead’. [K]

The overall dispositions of my interviewees towards the consultation and engagement process are summarised and set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Participants’ Views on the Role of Consultative Practices in CfE															
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Consultation	0	?	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	0	+	?	+	+	+4

This Table summarises the dispositions of the interviewees towards the role and efficacy of consultative practices in the CfE development. It shows that the majority of respondents expressed a positive view of such arrangements, although this is weighted towards the ‘insider’ perspectives. To some extent this is also reflected in the balance of narrative accounts presented in this section.

As well as the general impetus towards more consultative approaches prompted by the backdrop of devolution, the other explicit rationale for employing such a strategy was based on research around change management, according to one respondent:

‘research showed that you could make as many policy decisions as you like and you can produce as many glossy documents as you like, but they will not make any difference to the experience of the pupils in the classroom unless the teachers are fully engaged and fully believe in what they are doing’ [L].

A number of the respondents, especially from this ‘insider’ perspective, suggested that the ethos of the CfE development was to avoid ‘giving all the answers’ to the profession

[L]. In this view the development was clearly rooted in providing an element of guidance and framing for the teaching profession, but beyond that there would be a level of detail that would (and could) only be established by teachers themselves:

‘There is nothing more going to come about time allocations, or percentages or columns or choices and options and all that. All you need to do is make sure they can do all the third level experiences and outcomes and a selection of the fourth and nobody is going to give any more guidance on that. And that is the kind of jaw dropping moment’ [N].

It was acknowledged that some teachers seemed to be unready for this approach:

‘what we could see from the beginning was the slightly puzzled way that people responded to us to ask what they were getting next. Again the whole idea of this policy was that if we were going to involve people then we don’t give them the answers [L].

This recognition of a somewhat hesitant professional response has quite profound ramifications that are only now being confronted in other policy developments. As Donaldson noted (2010: p. 9):

‘The somewhat anxious response of many teachers to Curriculum for Excellence...particularly in the secondary sector, at least in part reflects a desire for more direct support and training than the Curriculum for Excellence philosophy embodies’.

The assumptions around the readiness of the profession for greater autonomy perhaps misunderstood the professional capacity of many teachers to respond to such opportunities (this is not a criticism on my part of that professional capacity; rather it is a recognition that such capacity ought first to be tested and supported before the deployment of these strategies: I will return to this issue later).

One respondent situated the CfE approach to engagement within the genealogy of previous policy development:

‘...we were quite consciously trying to learn from the experience of things like AiFL so we were quite anxious to make sure that it took engagement seriously and that it wasn’t a top down curriculum change and it did indeed try to at least negotiate ownership but nevertheless we were trying to be reasonably sophisticated in terms of drawing on what was known about models of educational change and how to engage’ [K].

A number of respondents [H, L, N] identified the process behind the iteration, testing and publication of the detailed Experiences and outcomes as the most significant success story of the consultation and engagement process. According to one, this:

‘would probably be the most substantial exercise that has ever been carried out and certainly the most substantial kind of exercise in working with staff and any piece of curriculum development in Scotland...I feel that we have got something good out of a process from the draft to the final [version] and that it has been pretty well received’ [N].

Such success around the generation of the Experiences and Outcomes might have fed the high expectations around professional capacity for autonomous action highlighted above. However the teachers who were most engaged in this process were perhaps a self-selecting cohort who had the inclination and confidence to contribute (as well as having been hand selected in many cases by HMIE [Interviewee F]).

An interviewee who had experience of the previous Higher Still developments in the 1990s suggested that CfE had been more consultative than Higher Still (which in this interviewee’s mind was driven primarily by HMIE):

‘[Higher Still]... was very much here are the parameters you are working within whereas the early stages of the Curriculum Review it was more a case of here are the broad outlines of what we are trying to achieve and what needs to be done so from that way I think it did start more consultatively.... I think it has tried to be consultative; it has tried to be responsive about what teachers are saying. The

problem for it is trying to get it clear between the prescription and the support, what's the difference there? That's where the problem is. [F].

This latter issue, the balance between prescription and support, lies at the dilemmas and paradoxes of post-devolution policymaking that I will return to later.

An interesting perspective that emerged (albeit from only one respondent) was that there was certainly an emphasis in government on reaching out to stakeholders, and new ways of explaining and doing policy had emerged, however in this individual's view this could be attributed less to the wider historical context of devolution, and more to the change of government in 2007.

Having focussed thus far on the largely positive picture that was portrayed by a number of respondents, it is important to balance this with the recognition that perceives only minimal qualitative change in real terms since 1999, or in fact 'business as usual'. One example from the wider scholarship of education policy in Scotland relates to the post-devolution aspirations around subsidiarity, that is, the principle that decisions ought to be taken as close as possible to the locale affected by those decisions.

Reeves (2008) suggests that:

'Post-devolution, control over developments within the [education] sector has continued to be exercised by central government through both the quality assurance (QA) system and financial ring-fencing of centrally mandated initiatives. There has been limited encouragement of innovation and risk-taking at grass roots level'.

This view seems to clash with the rhetoric of authentic engagement and greater autonomy, as well as the experiences of a number of my interviewees. It is an example of the perhaps irreconcilable differences in perspectives between those within power structures and those without.

Humes (2008: p. 73) suggests that the Review Group itself was appointed under the same 'patronage model' that he had criticised previously, and that the Review group Report had not been 'subjected to parliamentary scrutiny or public consultation'. One review Group interviewee acknowledged that there had not been a consultative process around the production of the Review Group document; although the National Debate had served as the key consultative component of the process:

'...it was a sense of well look we have had the consultation, we have got a sense of what people think is good about Scottish education, we have got a shortlist of things that people are concerned about and so once this report is done then we really don't need to consult on it. What we need to do is develop it and engage and so on but there wasn't really a case that a consultation exercise would emerge out of this' [C].

These criticisms perhaps reflect the wider process of disenchantment with the apparent failure of devolution and the Parliament to deliver better outcomes (Paterson, 2000b).

This was also captured by one interviewee, who suggested that:

'quite a lot of [initial optimism] has now subsided so in terms of very wide spread popular participation in educational policy making decision making, I think things have relapsed to something rather closer to the pre devolution position' [K].

According to another respondent, one problem was that 'engagement' was poorly defined, and some of the claims around consultation or engagement were perhaps overstated [C]. Another [E] also suggested that the meaning of 'consultation' was unclear: did this relate to basic principles, or the feasibility of specific proposals, such as the emphasis on interdisciplinary learning?

This respondent suggested that the Higher Education sector in particular had:

'...certainly felt most definitely excluded [from any consultation or engagement]... there were people with expertise in their particular subject areas who felt that that whole teacher education side was being totally neglected' [E].

Another respondent described the gap between the rhetoric and reality of consultation and engagement:

‘The extent to which the consultation really fed into change, I am not sure. There was a sense of mind made up, we’re going to make it happen... Well there was a lot of engagement, but a lot of people went to meetings and came out and said, “I’m none the wiser... What on earth does this mean?” Sometimes all you would get was a PowerPoint presentation and there was a level of ambiguity and lack of clarity and precision that people felt, “I am being consulted, or I have been given information but I am absolutely none the wiser.” So you could have gone to every head teacher and every principal teacher in Scotland and put a questionnaire to them and you would have got a thousand different answers about what CfE meant’ [J]

While this may appear to be an extended caricature of the engagement sessions that took place around Scotland, and while it is at odds with the much more positive version of events from others, this description appears to resonate with the views of many teachers (for example, EIS, 2009). This is an example of a situation where, whatever the facts of the matter, or indeed the authenticity of intent, perceptions matter.

One Review Group interviewee was very conscious of the genealogical locale for the development, as well as suggesting that behind the ‘new politics’ there was a new, more subtle regime of power in operation, indicating that with regard to the overall tone of the process:

‘...I think it had changed; some ways I think for the better because it seemed a more ideology free process in the discussion within the group but it had been replaced by maybe a more quiet, more manipulative direction being given to the work of the group that I had never really experienced before and Philip Rycroft I have to say was a master at doing that; easing us along in a very kind of pleasant way that nobody could ever fall out with him. So in some respects what you might say is that through the civil service, politicians were exerting a subtler kind of control than Michael Forsyth could every really attempt’ [C].

Again I have no doubt that such an interpretation of events and process would be vigorously denied by the civil service side, but again, perceptions are clearly important. In order to develop this element of the analysis I decided to evaluate the overall dispositions of Interview participants towards different features of the CfE process. This evaluation fed into a secondary but interesting dimension relating to the extent, if any, of divergence in perspective between the ‘insider’ and outsider’ perspectives overall.

Such perspectives emerged organically and implicitly across the interviews, as well as more directly when I asked all the interviewees to summarise what they thought were the most and least effective aspects of the CfE policy process. These were normally the last questions I asked in the interviews, and they provided a good opportunity for summative reflection on the part of the policy actors. The detailed breakdown of the data from the transcripts in relation to the questions around relative efficacy is provided in Table 8. However in reviewing the responses to the questions on efficacy of process, certain themes and conclusions were shared on a near universal basis; that the initial vision, goals and principles of CfE were broadly endorsed and supported; and were the outcome of a consensus, underpinned by the ‘mandate’ represented by the National Debate, and furnished with high-level political support that transcended administrations and electoral transitions. There is evidence of a genuine attempt to engage with the profession around certain aspects of CfE developments, which is demonstrated to some extent earlier in this Chapter.

Table 6 Dispositions of Respondents towards aspects of the process

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Consultation	0	?	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	0	+	?	+	+	+4
Partnership	-	0	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	?	+	-	-2
Other institutions	?	0	-	+	-	?	?	+	-	0	0	0	+	?	0
Change of Govt	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	?	+6
Openness	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+11
Continuity	?	0	0	+	0	?	+	-	-	-	+	?	0	-	-1
Subject Groups	?	0	?	+	-	0	+	+	-	-	?	?	+	+	+2
Research Informed	?	0	+	0	+	+	+	?	-	+	+	+	?	?	+6

Table 6 above provides a summary of my assessment of the relative dispositions of each interviewee towards the different components of the CfE process listed. These values are drawn from my interpretation of the relevant segments of the transcripts, and are thus inevitably subjective to some degree. The only questions I asked which requested a qualitative value judgement on the CfE process were the broad ‘What was effective/what was less effective’ constructs. The data that emerged from these is presented separately below. However I believe there was sufficient integrity in my approach to the transcripts that I was able to assign a value to the majority of relevant comments. Where the issue was not clearly addressed this is signified by a question mark, and where on balance the interviewee was neutral this is denoted by a 0 value.

Having acknowledged the limitations of this approach, I would argue that some revealing findings nonetheless emerge that are essential to this study. In summary, the interviewees involved in the CfE process generally felt positively inclined; and towards certain key dimensions to the process in particular, most notably in relation to the idea that there was a distinctive post-devolution commitment to greater openness; and to the extent of consultation and reference to research. Also notable in this dataset is the generally positive view of the change of government in 2007.

These Tables are intended to summarise the overall (cumulative) dispositions of the different interviewees towards certain aspects of the process. The data comes with the same qualifications as previous similar Tables around the subjective assignment of values. Again, however, I was looking to test one possible ‘common sense’ assumption about the attitudes of those who might be deemed ‘insiders’ to the process (signified in the second column with the value ‘3’) compared to those who were external to the key policy institutions (signified by ‘4’). The assumption was that the ‘insiders’ would be more likely to defend, or at least to promote a more positive picture, of the developments with which they were professionally engaged or responsible for.

In the event my analysis does indeed suggest that there was a slight divergence in responses between what might be termed the policy community perspective, composed mainly of those on the government/NDPB side, and those on the outside, typically academics. As I noted in Chapter Three Section 2, some other potential ‘outsider perspectives’ from certain stakeholder groups were not captured through my interviews, and it would have been interesting to capture and compare their views in this regard.

The government/NDPB group, coded 3 under ‘role in the second column in Table 7, tend to display more positive dispositions towards the different features of the policy process compared to those who did not belong to the Partnership (coded 4 under ‘role’). This difference would have been more marked if not for the notably more negative perceptions across a range of themes of Interviewee J. Table 8 below provides an extended summary of the values attributed to the interviewee responses, as well as some paraphrasing of key quotations relating to specific aspects of the process. The tentative evidence of differences in perspectives between insider and outsider groups can be interpreted in a number of different ways, not least with caution due to the small sample size. On the one hand it might be taken to suggest that there might be an institutional culture within the Partner organisations that remains wary of offering full and frank accounts to outsiders. This assertion is hard to sustain on such relatively modest evidence. Another possibility is that the particular individuals in this group had a genuine and sincerely held positive view of the process in which they had been integral participants. It should also be noted that only three interviewees displayed a negative balance of dispositions, suggesting that the majority of respondents, irrespective of their insider/outsider status, tended to have relatively positive views of the process. One might also suggest that the insider/outsider binary presented here is a false dichotomy, in the sense that all invited participants in a policy process can be characterised as ‘insiders’ to some degree.

Table 7 Overall disposition: positive, neutral or negative; by role

	Role	0	?	-	+	Average
A	3	1	5	1	1	0
B	4	5	1	0	2	+2
C	4	1	1	4	2	-2
D	3	1	0	0	7	+7
E	4	1	0	5	2	-3
F	4	1	2	2	3	+1
G	3	0	1	0	7	+7
H/I	3	0	1	1	6	+5
J	3	0	0	7	1	-6
K	4	2	0	3	3	0
L	3	1	1	0	6	+6
M	X	1	5	0	2	+2
N	3	1	1	0	6	+6
O	3	0	3	2	3	+1
TOTALS		15	21	25	51	

Table 8 Interviewee views on effectiveness of the process

Interview Code	Role	Most effective	Less effective
A	3	Interdisciplinary learning	Constant change; unanswered questions; Communication; different organisational cultures
B	1, 2, 4	Consensus around 4 capacities	Terminology of implementation unhelpful; old models of change
C	1,4	Starting from positive base of ND/consensus; impetus from Chair of RG	Too brief timescale for work of RG; overly cautious in projecting a vision
D	3 +?	Engagement with Local Authorities	Lack of planning discipline/too organic a process in early stages
E	1,4	Genuine attempts to share thinking; discussion papers	Engagement of “ordinary teachers”
F	4	More consultative than Higher Still (driven by HMIE). More devolved form of partnership	Structures less clear than Higher Still; less centralised funding for development. Staff turnover; short term secondments. Complex matrix of subject areas, cross cutting themes etc. Staggered release of documents
G	1,2?, 3	Review Group process and methodology; 4 capacities; focus on values	Could have been clearer in communicating goals; managing expectations; reaching all those you need to reach, including local authorities.
H	1, 2, 3	Commitment and consensus around Capacities and principles; Personalisation & Enjoyment; made the most of scarce resources; 3-18 curriculum; broad curriculum coverage; nurturing next generation of curriculum leaders through subject writing groups	Should have tied qualifications and assessment in from the outset; limited join-up with teacher professionalism agenda; extended professionalism not evident in the process; emphasis on input model, on the need to pump money into system; too many adjectival education projects in the initial post-devolution era
I	2, 3		
J	1, 2, 3	Composition of the Review Group, and ability to achieve consensus. Counterintuitive positive is that the process has “flushed out” the need to rethink the current policy architecture.	Lack of clarity on roles. Should have addressed assessment at outset; good capacities but without structure for outcomes
K	2, 4	Early Years and Primary; developments despite apparent radicalism are in tune with “Scottish tradition of incrementalism”. People have been receptive in these sectors.	Programme Board relatively powerless: didn’t have decision making powers Concern about Secondary sector. Lack of decisiveness around levels/points of stability. Scepticism about HMIE ‘rewarding people’ for “playing along with CfE”. Programme Board had operational oversight but lacked strategic

L	1, 2,3	Details of the engagement process, from broad principles to details, to Es and Os:	understanding and planning Should have considered the “backwash effects of qualifications” earlier in the process. Shouldn’t have started with 3-15. Just postponing inevitable need to consider what happened next. Far too late getting to that in the process. Consistency/quality of response/engagement by local authorities.
M	X	The commissioning of literature reviews around the curriculum; consistent with claims around evidence informed policy	Communication with teachers poor; delays and periods of uncertainty. Loss of momentum due to turnover.
N	1, 2, 3	Process of engagement leading to Es and Os	Should have been clearer sooner about the professional development strategy
O	1?, 2, 3	Es and Os?	Issues around communication; civil service had responsibility and understood how to communicate govt policy but not educational policy in particular, e.g. BTC3. Profession still unsure about the core message. Lacks professional leadership (could have come from LTS but didn’t. Doesn’t have to be HMIE. Ministers too closely associated with CfE at all stages; should have been more distant.

CHAPTER SIX SECTION 2 POLICY ARCHITECTURE

In this section I consider whether my case study approach focusing on CfE can reveal anything about the nature and structure of the policymaking architecture in post-devolution Scotland. By applying my interpretation of the evidence from literature and interviews to the frameworks and typologies I presented in Chapter Two I sought to establish which modes of policymaking were most apparent in the case of CfE. In the table below I have revisited Raffe and Spours' schematic as this appears to be the most conducive model to any attempt to provide an overall characterisation of the architecture of CfE. In the previous section I presented an extended discussion that sought to determine the collaborative and consultative credentials of the CfE process. In this section below I will apply a similar analysis to some of the 'rationalist' and 'politicised' factors. I will also explore two critical themes in relation to the policy architecture: the notion of **consensus** and the role of **continuity** in the policy process.

Table 9 Mapping *A Curriculum for Excellence* to Raffe & Spours' models of the policy process and policy learning (see original in Chapter Two, Section 2)

	Rationalist	Collaborative	Politicised
1. Relation of political contestation to policy learning		✓	✓
2. Models of governance		✓	
3. Decision-making process	✓	✓	✓
4. Types of knowledge	✓	✓	✓

5. Learning from elsewhere	✓	✓	✓
6. Information flows	✓	✓	✓
7. Policy learning relationships	?	✓?	

The mapping exercise represented in Table 9 above is presented with some caution; however it is based on my overall reading of the various forms of data gathered for this study. It appears to show that there was no one fixed or clear approach to the CfE policymaking process. This resonates with my observations later on the modes of governance in CfE, and suggests the need for greater clarity in future. A number of further dimensions of the process and evidence arising helped to inform this mapping; namely the perceptions of participants around the role of policy learning, the extent to which they felt that the CfE process was informed by research, and the extent of any ‘politicisation’ in the CfE process.

It has been suggested that education policy in the UK sometimes ‘seems to proceed without memory and without strategy’ (Stasz & Wright, 2007: p. 157). The analysis of the content of CfE provided by Priestley and Humes (2010) certainly supports the notion that the policy lacked evidence of having learned from the past. With regard to the notions of policy learning (from the past) and policy transfer (from other systems), there is some evidence from my interviews that this was a component, albeit not necessarily prominent, of CfE developments. Others have suggested that in recent times, and with specific reference to the National Debate and CfE:

‘Scottish policy-makers have been more concerned with establishing systems which respond to the traditions and expectations of the nation as with learning from the other jurisdictions’ (Hart & Tuck, 2007: p. 105).

Review Group participants had sometimes contrasting views on the emphasis within the Group on research as a formative influence. Of the wider group of interview respondents those who expressed a view on this dimension tended to be neutral or fairly positive, with only one negative view expressed (see Table x below)

Table 10 Interviewee views on whether the CfE process was research informed

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Research Informed	?	0	+	0	+	+	+	?	-	+	+	+	?	?	+6

The following responses from four interviewees provide a sense of the partial endorsement from participants of the view that research had been a component of the process, without being a significant driver of the discourse or the material outcomes of the development:

‘It was probably much more about being grounded in the national debate..... The major research input was the putting forward to groups from universities from the educational faculties of the initial statements about each of the curricular areas and asking for an informed comment on that which did lead to significant change...’ [B].

‘I think it was research informed but I think it would be over-stating the case to say that it was research led, I don’t think that that was ever on the agenda that we should do a trawl of the research, find out the best of what had happened and then try and somehow do it’ [C].

‘It has been part of it but I wouldn’t go as far as to say that it has been prominent. I think you would probably find some people who think it has been more prominent that I would suggest’ [D].

‘Certainly I think there was a genuine concern to try to make the process as research informed as possible, although what I don’t think that extended to was in a sense going back to square one and saying does research suggest this is a sensible thing to be doing’ [K].

With regard to the idea of a commitment to policy learning from elsewhere, as I suggested earlier, a small number of the ‘insider’ participants had highlighted this approach, including preparatory investigation into:

‘curriculum review developments in Finland, Australia and New Zealand and we have had some involvement in looking at parts of Canada (I think it’s Ontario).we had a look at other models of curriculum change and how you go about looking at where the pitfalls might be. Whether we have learned all the lessons or not is a different matter but we certainly compared notes’ [D].

However the extent to which such an outward looking perspective might lead to radical change could be overstated. Perhaps the most lauded educational system of the present time, in Finland, is predicated on some basic principles, practices (and a broader cultural context) that would require considerable political courage and systemic upheaval to enact in Scotland, such as a physically unified primary and secondary system, a much later start to formal education, universal free school meals and the abolition of the national inspections regime (see Webb et al, 1998, and Sahlberg, 2011, for an overview of Finnish school reforms).

The fact of political influence on policymaking can be viewed positively, neutrally or negatively. It can be positive if one supports the thrust of a particular policy and sees high level political endorsement and ongoing commitment to that policy as a necessary driver of successful implementation. It might be viewed negatively if one believes that educational change ought primarily to be driven by professional reflection, practitioner research and expertise. It might also be viewed negatively if one is concerned about the fragility of educational reform where it might be vulnerable to the relatively short term mindset engendered by the electoral cycle (Hodgson & Spours, 2007: p. 193). The period in the 1980s and 1990s described previously highlights the impact that an overtly politicised process can have.

It is apparent that the primary driving forces behind the National Debate, the establishment of the Review Group and the implementation of the CfE process were the incumbent Ministers during this period; Cathy Jamieson, who was the Minister at the time of the National Debate, and Peter Peacock, Minister at the time of the Review Group Report, supported by their senior officials at the Scottish Executive.

The presentation of CfE was also highly significant in its symbolism: the Review Group Report contained an introductory endorsement signed by the Minister and his Deputy, and was distributed as a package alongside the Ministerial Review This conferred ‘high political status’ and showed that politicians were:

‘demonstrating that they see the processes of educational policy review and political decision-making as fully linked’ (Hart & Tuck, 2007: p.125).

Another factor in this early phase was the legislative context provided by the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act, 2000, which had created a statutory framework clarifying and strengthening the responsibilities of central and local government around education, including reporting on progress against the five National Priorities (Hart & Tuck, 2007: pp. 126-127). This tension between the devolution of responsibility to local government at the same time as a large scale centrally driven initiative such as CfE is reflected in the differing interviewee views on the relative success of partnership working with local authorities:

Table 11 Interviewee response to Change of Government in 2007

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Change of Govt	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	?	+6

While I did not ask the interviewees a direct question about the notion of ‘politicisation’ per se, I did ask them what, if any, impact the change of government in 2007 had had. The issue of this change in May 2007 (from Labour/LibDem coalition to minority SNP administration) was addressed by the majority of interviewees. The general feeling was that this had had a positive impact on the CfE process. Of the 13 interviewees to whom it

was possible to assign a value to their responses, ten were positive, while only three were negative. A recurring theme in many of the interviews was the notion that policy *consensus* was a crucial driver of policy *continuity*. Another theme, also captured below, was the enhanced focus and direction under the new administration, after the perhaps inevitable lull around the election itself.

‘...at first of all it was a sense of uncertainty but the uncertainty didn’t last very long. I think that the case for CfE had been put and put well by 2007 and I think that the consensus had been achieved...it would really be taking up the vase and smashing it if CfE was not going to be taken forward because there was so much of a consensus around it in Scotland, so I thought it was likely that CfE would go forward and I think that the Scottish Government took it forward in an impressive and skilful and deftly handled way’ [A].

It was suggested that the impact of the change of government was not so much on content as on process: Labour (now in opposition) couldn’t be seen to criticise something that was ‘actually their baby so to speak...There is much more of a consensus around CfE between The Labour Party and certainly and SNP than you would have expected with a change of Government but I think the hiatus has been really because Ministers were lacking in experience and therefore it gave a chance for civil servants to take over’ [C].

According to one civil servant the change might normally have been expected to have ushered in a change in approach, but instead:

‘one of the decisive factors probably to the extent to which the Cabinet Secretary was able to listen to the advice she got from the OECD which of course had been commissioned by the previous administration, but she got the OECD report and I think she was able to make a clear connection between the advice she was getting from that report and what we were trying to do with CfE’ [D].

A number of respondents suggested that the pace had certainly picked up after the election [G, N].

A more general point about the interface between the political world and the policy world was raised in relation to the possible media reaction to CfE:

‘The ability of some of the Scottish press to produce negative headlines for education was a factor that didn’t determine our decisions or the way we worded the documentation, but did make us aware that the consequent media launch would require to be done with some care’ [B].

The politicisation of policymaking means that interventions can be triggered by a range of external factors, such as PISA or OECD reports that are possibly contradictory to the intent of proposals aimed at a broader curriculum. On other occasions, systematic evidence-based policy proposals can be sidelined or ignored if they contradict particular incumbent ideologies (for example the Rose Report in England); or if policy is driven by the needs of employers, this is likely to distort the process further; the global economic downturn places pressure on employers to receive ready-prepared workforce with particular skill-sets rather than broader capacities as envisaged in CfE.

The two models from Stoker (2006) in Figure 3 (reproduced below for convenience) help to illustrate the possible lines of governance and communication within a policy. My research suggests that these two modes of governance co-existed, somewhat uncomfortably, within the development of CfE. According to Etzioni (in Hill & Hupe, 2002: p. 177), compliance can be achieved in a system of governance by three means of applying power: coercive, remunerative and normative. A hierarchical structure is likely to use primarily coercive forms of power, while a community/network mode of governance is more likely to rely on the reinforcement of normative values.

These observations seem to reinforce the sense that the Scottish model remains a sometimes uncomfortable blend of policymaking styles, and that political imperatives may sometimes over-rule concerns around pedagogy. The policy architecture that has emerged in the post-devolution period is a hybrid model that has not yet resolved the tension between consensual, pluralistic and mediating instincts on the one hand; and

centralised control and governance on the other. I have already suggested that the development incorporated a blend of different approaches in the Raffe and Spours schematic. While there was a particularly strong consonance with the collaborative model, there were also characteristics that related to politicised and rational policymaking.

The CfE process provides tangible corroboration of these sometimes competing styles of governance, and suggests that the possibly uncomfortable or contradictory hybrid of styles that remains evident in Scotland has to be acknowledged, and perhaps reviewed. It is also possible to assess this hybridity in a different and more sympathetic light: it might simply be a continuation of the organic system of checks and balances – somewhat like an unwritten constitution- that emerged in the pre-devolutionary period to support the compromises and managed consensus that had to be negotiated between government and the extended profession.

Figure 3 Two Descriptive Models of Policy Development (adapted from Stoker, G. 2006: p. 79).

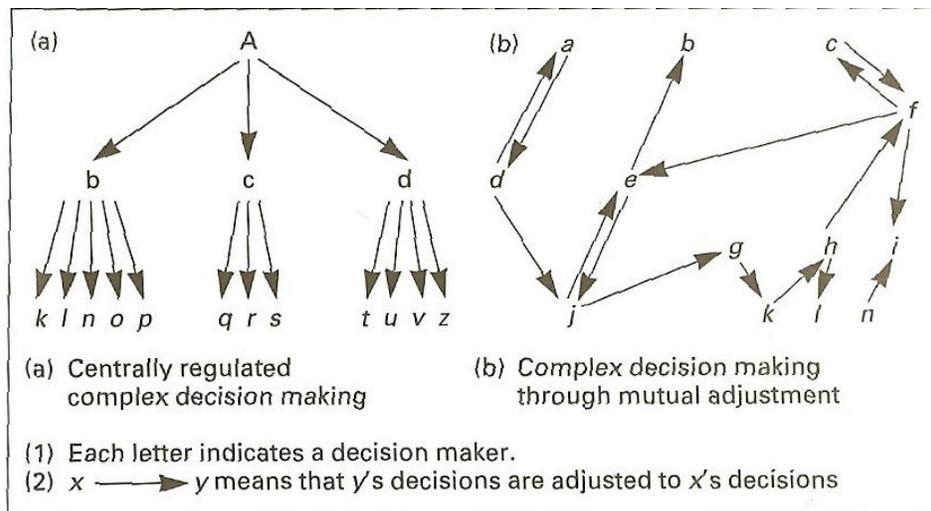


Figure 4.1 How government works

Source: Adapted from Charles Lindblom, *The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making through Mutual Adjustment* (New York: Free Press, 1965).

In any event, in order to achieve change it seems that there is a need to combine flexible approaches to policymaking as well as more standardised approaches for major policy initiatives. The need for flexibility arises because, as McLaughlin (2000, p.442) notes, policies might be located on a range of continua, including ‘generality and specificity’, and ‘depth’ and ‘surface’. Where a policy is located on these continua ought to help to determine the policy approach. In the case of CfE, it was clearly an initiative involving a blend of these characteristics, thus implying an even greater need for a flexible approach.

A tension that emerged in some interviews relates to the government discourse that was expressed on a number of occasions in the rhetoric of ‘direction of travel’; this often seems to imply that policy development is viewed within government as a linear process driven more by (relatively short term) political imperatives rather than the kind of circular/feedback loop such as Parsons’ model that might be seen as more ‘rational’. Some tensions and frustrations emerged in the interviews, especially within government and some of the NDPBs, between the desire to be consultative and the frustrations with slow progress; and between the politically driven desire for ‘quick wins’ in policy terms and the desire to avoid frightening the profession by the pursuit of ‘consensus’.

A recurring theme in the genealogy of Scottish education has been the focus on consensus as both a goal and a pre-requisite for action. In the post-devolution context, the narrative of consensus remains very prominent in Scottish education, but this appears to have consequences for the governance, pace and ambition of any changes in policy.

‘Both the state...and civil society...can collude in presenting a consensual view of policy development. Policy networks are used by the state to limit the unexpected, to control the policy agenda [and] to have incremental rather than radical change...’ (Tisdall and Bell, 2006; pp112-113).

This observation, drawn from experience of young people’s engagement (or lack of it) in elements of Scottish public policymaking, resonates with one of the key themes in this study; that the appearance of consensus is sometimes contrived for the symbiotic benefit

of both government and non-governments interests alike. It has the potential to undermine and over-mediate policy goals.

Keating (2005: p218) notes that one of the unintended consequences of greater accountability and transparency in the system can be 'political timidity'. In this view, the advent of the Scottish Parliament and the ambitions for greater openness might have actually mitigated against more radical policy ambitions.

Creating a policy document that meets a desire for consensus can also build potential limitations into the scope for action, as noted by Carr et al (2006):

'insofar as agreement may here have been secured at a level of generality at which interesting practical disagreement cannot really arise, the difficulty of civilized dissent from the overall tone and drift of the document could also seem something of a shortcoming. In short, the trouble with such normative generality is that it is hard to see what precise educational prescriptions might actually be ruled out or in' (Carr et al, 2006).

As one interviewee put it,

'Few people have disagreed with the general broad principles [in the Review Group document] but you could say that in a sense may have been an easy win and therefore doesn't lead to any real change' [B].

The original vision of CfE certainly feels like the product of consensus in terms of the universality and relatively non-controversial nature of the broad purposes of education identified, and the avoidance of detailed prescriptions that might undermine the consensus view promoted. However in some respects this approach merely deferred controversy and it was only when the process of engagement and consultation commenced in earnest that those areas that might provoke dissent and resistance were given the opportunity to emerge. In particular, the detailed operational and pedagogical concerns around assessment and certification in the secondary sector that could have been foretold from the publication of the Review in 2004 were not systematically addressed

until after a point when the detail of the curriculum itself (described through the Experiences and Outcomes) had long since emerged.

Some practical examples of the management of consensus emerged from accounts of the Review Group process. One participant indicated that there had been some limited dissent in the Review Group around the reaching the appropriate balance between reprofessionalisation/autonomy and the danger of schools going off and doing their own thing. There was also a recognition within the Group that there would always be a tension between the desire for transformational changes and the need to have a pragmatic approach with an agenda that could reasonably be asked of teachers and the wider educational system [B].

Another Review Group member indicated that there appeared at the time to be a great deal of consensus around the table, but:

‘the question really has to be asked, was everybody really signing up to the same thing?...the 4 capacities and various bullet points were written in a way which I think were helpful, but were clearly open to interpretation....So in a sense I think that there was consensus but you would have to question it and whether or not people really had the same kind of ideas about what the implications of CfE would have become’ [C].

Scottish educational policymaking might be regarded as in some sense beholden to the myth of consensus and partnership; it makes it harder to be decisive or to reach decisions that are politically or culturally difficult to sell to a profession or wider public. This phenomenon appears to have inhibited transformational change in the case of CfE, and has arguably led to an over-mediation and dilution of the original vision and principles. Such a conclusion could be interpreted as fundamentally anti-democratic and authoritarian; however it is grounded in a clear sense of the nature of democratic accountabilities. The emphasis on mediation can lead to the retrenchment of certain undesirable professional practices, and it creates a rich vacuum of opportunity for other forces of conservatism to dilute change. It may also be that such an approach

underestimates the capacity of many teachers to engage with radical thinking; it is often argued that their professional realities make the time and space for reflection and professional development very limited.

One respondent suggested that in CfE there had been a missed opportunity to be more radical:

‘I’ve got a wee feeling that we should have been bloody, bold and resolute at that point and we should have said that we have got something here that we think can transform Scottish education and let’s take it out and engage really with people and not so much do a selling job but be prepared to stand up and defend what we thought were the basic principles of it and I don’t know that that was ever really done’ [C].

Another area of particular interest that emerged over the course of my research was the issue of continuity in the CfE policy process. This element can to some extent be linked to the status of ‘learning relationships’ in Raffe and Spours’ model. One very obvious manifestation of this dimension was the emerging evidence (and conflicting accounts) from respondents of civil service mobility or ‘churn’. I had first become aware of this phenomenon while working briefly within the former Scottish Office as a member of the Constitution Unit charged with establishing the Scottish Parliament’s structure and functions prior to the first election in May 1999. During this period I noted the rapid turnover of some colleagues and their regular movements between different Departments and posts. I also learned that such mobility was an essential prerequisite for career advancement. One colleague at the time described the tactic as the ‘shopping trolley approach’ (see also IPPR, 2006: p. 40) where the ambitious civil servant accumulated experience across as many different policy areas as possible. Ideally they ought to spend time working in Whitehall Departments as well, with the Cabinet Office being the ultimate posting for the most ambitious. Coming from a teaching background where many colleagues taught for their entire careers in one school, this was indeed a culture shock.

As I began to conduct my interviews, the same situation began to re-emerge in a number of accounts. Interviewees noted not only the rapid turnover within the middle and lower ranks of civil servants, but also high levels of turnover within LTS, especially around the development phase. I wished to explore whether this had impacted on the conduct of policy development and implementation around CfE.

Table 12 Interviewee Perceptions of Staff Continuity

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H/I	J	K	L	M	N	O	Average
Continuity	?	0	0	+	0	?	+	-	-	-	+	?	0	-	-1

Table 10 above summarises the dispositions of the interviewees towards the issue of staff continuity. It is again noteworthy that the positive views emerge from ‘insider’ perspectives, while the ‘external’ policy actors tend to be ambivalent or negative about this issue. In the section below I will illustrate the two perspectives on this situation that emerged, beginning with those accounts that expressed concern. I will then provide the civil service perspective that defended the situation.

Within the civil service, the ability to take on a new policy area, to ‘grasp the brief’ is seen as the mark of the most able and is therefore a crucial component of upward progression. For those who are not part of this culture of mobility, it can appear somewhat counter-intuitive and anachronistic. It has been criticised for contributing to poor ‘institutional memory’ within Government (IPPR, 2006: p.40).

One respondent [C] suggested that civil service turnover was ‘constant’. According to this interviewee it didn’t however impact negatively on the overall conduct of the Review Group because Philip Rycroft provided a senior point of stability:

‘...but almost as soon as the group finished he moved on and of course then he moved back. But in the interim the people who worked directly below him in the Schools Division, I have lost count of the number of changes there have been...’[C].

Another interviewee suggested that with frequent changes in personnel,

‘you get people coming in who don’t know the background and particularly when you have a fairly complicated model...[you] require someone with quite a sophisticated understanding of a wide range of areas, then I think it is quite hard for a new civil servant to come in and simply see what is going on and to get a feel for how it is moving’ [K].

The lack of continuity in personnel was seen by one interviewee in a somewhat sinister light, believing that it might be:

‘to do with the civil servants keeping control....I think there is a wee fear that if they were to allow people like ourselves to be involved in that that somehow or other it might develop into something that they don’t want it to be...’ [C].

Such an approach had a material impact on the process according to the same interviewee:

‘I think when you look at the subsequent publications that have emerged since the original group, a number of them don’t seem to be all that consistent...with the underlying values of the initial document and there are certainly some specific things that have emerged and I have no idea where they came from, I have no idea who authored them, no idea where the ideas came from...’ [C].

Another interviewee made a similar observation of the process by which (it was claimed), the civil service sought to regain control of the process, although in this instance it was partially ascribed to the role of individual personalities in the process where:

‘what had been a relatively open [process] compared to the past system of governance...changed when [a named civil servant] took over the role and to much more reflect a traditional civil service view and that more or less coincided I think with a change in role of the Programme Board where responsibility for the management of the programme became very much in-house within what became the Schools Directorate.....I think the extent to which if you like civil service management is sometimes partially determined by the personalities and backgrounds of individual civil servants is something that can’t be ignored’ [B]

Another feature of governance that implicated civil servants in the assertion of control over the process was the impact of elections, and in particular, the change of government in 2007 (from Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition to minority SNP administration).

According to one respondent, this:

‘allowed another hiatus to develop and I think in a sense strengthened the position of the civil service because they provided the continuity’ [C].

The above accounts provide evidence of the concern and discomfort from a number of key participants in the CfE process around the mobility and lack of continuity in staffing and direction. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, civil service and some other related respondents explained the rationale for such movement within the context of the wider civil service culture I had encountered professionally and described at the beginning of this section. One civil servant interviewed for this dissertation contended that the optimum period that a civil servant ought to work within one policy area should be about 3 to 7 years; any less is insufficient to grasp the complexities of a particular area, and any more risks ‘losing perspective’ by being too close to the subject (G). It is interesting to note that recent research suggests that the median figure for time in post in the Senior Civil Service was 2.9 years (IPPR, 2006: p.40), although it may be that the figure in the Scottish Government, and at lower levels, is slightly different.

From this standpoint, the civil servant does not necessarily need specific ‘expertise’ in the sense that this term would be understood in relation to other high level actors within the educational system, such as senior managers in a school or local authority education department, professors in University, or HMIE, where relatively narrow expertise, acquired and utilised over the long term, is acknowledged and rewarded. Their role is to act as a ‘gearing mechanism between the government and the public’ [G], and rather than being experts *per se*, some of their skill set lies in ‘knowing who the experts are [G].

Another respondent noted that:

‘...it does mean that [civil service] reliance on sound, professional advice for the policy makers is absolutely essential’ [N].

One civil servant respondent described the typical career path, which involves mobility across different policy issues, but according to this account also requires the accumulation of specialist knowledge:

‘Joining Government as a civil servant and working your way through different posts often quite rapidly, and the assumption being that you absorb understanding of policy, you ring your experience in policy development to a topic and you become proficient in representing some of the expert information in policy terms and using your policy experience to turn that information into a public position... That happens often and it has certainly happened in this programme’ [CfE] [D].

Gale (2007: p. 227) provides a similar perspective from a policy making structure in a different jurisdiction. A senior policy actor from Australia stated in this research that in the production of policy, ‘it’s the capacity of people that’s important more than their so called expertise’. As Gale notes, the emphasis on policy and political expertise rather than subject knowledge inevitably ‘has implications regarding the allocation of values’ (Gale, *op.cit.*).

Despite some of the concerns raised above about civil service mobility, there have been one or two individual points of stability within their mid-level to senior-level staffing relating to CfE, including some strategic appointments that were established in 2004 some of which remained in place at least up to 2010. This would imply a recognition that, at least in the case of CfE, there is a need for elements of continuity.

However when one reviews the overall picture from around 2004 to 2008 there is a notable lack of continuity in terms of key individual figures associated with the policy process. Membership of the various groups with oversight appears fluid, and the notion of ‘institutional memory’ does not appear to have significant traction. According to the published documents Bernard McLeary (Chief Executive of LTS) appears to be the only person who was involved in the three major governance committees [Review Group, Programme Board and Management Board (and even he joined the Review Group later in

their deliberations having succeeded Mike Baughan). A small number of individuals served across two of the main bodies, including George MacBride (EIS/independent) and Gill Robinson (Scottish Executive).

With regard to the overall impact on the development of CfE, there were different views among interviewees on the impact, whether positive, negative, or neutral, that it might have had on the nature of the project. One non-civil service interviewee (J) unequivocally suggested that Scottish education in general is 'ill-served' by this process. Another stated that there was inconsistency within the civil service about their role, ranging from a desire to be involved in the finest points of detail to a much more 'laissez-faire' attitude [H]. Others noted that if the civil service lacks institutional memory in relation to education, it is perhaps inevitable that it will turn to HMIE in the first instance for such expertise, thus reinforcing the particular power of the Inspectorate in the system, and calling into question the extent of their distance from the leadership of policy development. At the very least it seems to blur the boundaries while remaining technically distinct.

There is a clear tension between an approach that values continuity; and one that favours the infusion of fresh thinking into a process. There is also a paradox around the nature of the civil service in policymaking, in the sense that on the one hand they act as a collective point of continuity and essentially remain in place irrespective of changes brought about by the electoral and political cycle, however the mobility described above means that this institutional continuity is often not reflected in continuity of personnel.

One respondent suggested that there is little prospect of a change to this situation:

'...we can't expect the civil service pattern of postings and so on to change for this particular bit of work any more than you might for other very significant policy development so I think that's the way it is' [N].

This view appears to suggest that there is little scope for changes in the system. In the final Chapter I nonetheless present a number of proposals that might enhance the policy process in the light of the evidence and analysis from this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

‘Today, as in the past, it is a characteristic of reformers and the administrators that serve them that they come to believe themselves to be more intelligent than their predecessors. In this they tend to be mistaken’ (Newsam, 1992: p252).

This comment suggests that policy development might fail to learn from the mistakes of the past. Some recent commentators have suggested that the development of CfE suffered from a similarly ahistorical approach (Priestley and Humes, 2010). As intimated previously it lies beyond the scope or aims of this study to assert that CfE has been a policy ‘failure’. However clearly there are lessons that can be learned as long as the system is open enough and mature enough not to see the essential process of review and critique in threatening terms. In this spirit I conclude this study with a number of observations and related recommendations for the future conduct of educational policy in Scotland.

1. Procedures for policy consultation should be reviewed and enhanced further, with a greater focus on deliberative forms of engagement at all stages in the policy process.

As Pirrie has stated:

‘the main purpose of public consultations...is to promote honest and open debate in order to inform the future direction of public policy’ (Pirrie, 2005).

While, as I have suggested previously, there is evidence of a commitment within the governance structures to consultation in some aspects of the CfE process, this commitment does not appear to have been recognised in the wider professional context, and while the successful enactment of the vision for CfE relied, and continues to rely, upon the cooperation and goodwill of classroom teachers across Scotland, as a broad group they were perceived to be relatively marginal to the deeper processes of reform I have described in this study. In some respects they were represented in the process through the professional associations, and as I have acknowledged, certain elements of

the vision for a new approach to consulting and engaging with the profession appear to have been realised, notably around the draft outcomes and experiences. However the 'grassroots' perception of the efficacy of the CfE development for many teachers appears to be less positive (EIS, 2009).

Paterson (2000a: pp.8-9) in looking ahead to the possible role of the new Parliament, offered a radical vision of how the Parliament might work. He suggested that Parliament might eschew the notion of working by consensus with the 'influential professional groups in civic Scotland'. Rather, it might seek to provoke 'popular participation against their conservatism', by engaging with 'less influential professionals (such as teachers) against the policy community'. He acknowledged that this might lead to 'stormier' outcomes and barriers to reform, but it would at least provoke 'an intense public debate about education and its role in Scottish identity'.

In certain respects this vision has been reflected in the genealogy and governance of CfE. The collaborative elements in the process around the National Debate and the Review Group helped to shape a broad vision of the curriculum that appeared to be a fair representation of the views of the educational policy community and teaching profession alike. However the relatively narrower application of participative development evident in the mediation around subject areas and the creation of the Experiences and Outcomes then somewhat undermined the initial vision. The process seemed to be ill-equipped to deal with the inevitable tensions and conflict that emerged as CfE moved from the abstract to the concrete. Moreover, the desire to retain consensus only led in the end to the postponement of conflict.

Does the democratic impulse towards widespread engagement necessarily lead to better policy and more effective policymaking? While the Collaborative model (Raffe and Spours) may carry a certain moral and ethical weight, in operational terms is it always the most appropriate model? The assumption that consultation will always lead to better policy relies upon expectations around the professional capacity, and perhaps the ability to demonstrate dis-interestedness and neutrality for the greater good, among the extended

range of consultees. There is a tantalising yet highly controversial and indeed almost counter-intuitive conclusion to be drawn from what we can learn from the development of CfE from initial high principle in 2004 to the publication of detailed outcomes and experiences in 2009 and the more fraught latter stages of the process. In this instance, it may be that the commitment to consultation and engagement with the teaching profession ultimately undermined the spirit and intent of the proposals through the over-mediation of the details of the proposals.

Sincere attempts to create a more inclusive, democratic and participative model of policy development also appear to have partially foundered under the assault of complexity; in underlying tensions that were not resolved early enough in the process, most notably around the issue of assessment and national qualifications in the secondary stages. There ought to be greater transparency, perhaps incorporating agreed protocols and methodologies. Much of the work of the Parliament and Government since 1999 has relied on the management of a (sometimes fragile) consensus, whether within Parliamentary Committees or with stakeholders such as the main professional associations representing teachers.

At the same time the principles of consensus and consultation carried some moral weight during the process, but this might be undermined by the insertion of additional details that have not themselves emerged from the consultative process; this happened in the transition from National Debate to Review Group Report; from the Report to the Ministerial Response; and during the subsequent implementation phase.

The various forms of scrutiny that the Scottish Parliament undertakes as the legislature (processing legislation on its journey towards enactment, as well as providing scrutiny and oversight of the Executive and its Ministers, notably through debates and ministerial ‘question times’ in plenary session, and through a Committee system) strongly suggest that the post-devolution landscape has facilitated a more open and potentially more democratic and accountable policymaking process in Scottish education.

CfE has featured prominently in both plenary and committee proceedings of the Scottish Parliament at various points in its development. There have been policy announcements by the Executive/Government, major debates in the Parliament (both Government –led and opposition-initiated, together with evidence taking sessions in Parliamentary committee. I would not be surprised if, in the future, there will be further investigation and review of the CfE process in the Parliament, perhaps from a more critical standpoint than hitherto.

Another discourse around CfE has emerged which is much less regulated, carries no official weight yet arguably ought to be acknowledged: it can be found in teachers' use of blogs and online discussions². These new media outlets provide an alternative, unmediated and (perhaps crucially) anonymous locale for teachers to express their views, whether positive, neutral or negative, on new educational developments such as CfE. It would form the basis for another interesting study to compare the nature of discourse in this alternative arena with the more official forums.

Evidence from recent research into the experiences of teachers who were involved in some way with the CfE process suggests that an approach based on authentic, deeper forms of engagement appears to have a far greater positive impact than more superficial modes of consultation (Baumfield et al, 2010).

There is a wider choice to be made around future modes of governance in Scotland. Pierre and Peters (in Hill & Hupe: p. 180) suggest that there are three possible routes: 'reasserting control'; 'letting other regimes rule'; or moving towards 'communitarianism, deliberation and direct democracy'. This latter goal is clearly in tune with the rhetoric around devolution, however it remains to be seen whether Scottish educational policy has the will and the capacity to endorse this approach.

² See for example, the Times Educational Supplement discussion forum: <http://www.tes.co.uk/forums.aspx?navcode=14>

2. Procedures for policy consultation ought to be explicitly connected to opportunities for professional development and reflection, and should be presented in a context that recognises parallel policy developments.

It was perhaps unfortunate timing that the critical latter stages of the implementation phase of CfE coincided with the impact of the global financial crisis (from around 2007-2008). Significant cuts have taken place at local authority level, in many local authorities decimating the cadre of intermediate practitioners (Humes, 2008: pp.77-78) such as ‘Quality Improvement Officers’ and ‘Development Officers’ who might in other circumstances have played a major role in supporting the most recent developments. More generally, access to quality CPD is essential (EIS, 2009) if the goal is authentic collaborative policymaking and co-construction of CfE learning experiences and assessment frameworks.

Outright boycotts of the revised qualifications structures to support CfE have been mooted by a number of professional associations. To some extent the fate of the CfE development has also now been interwoven with a number of other policy processes. These were envisaged as facilitating aspects of CfE, but they might instead add further points of tension in the system, in turn creating new lines of fracture in the policy landscape. This new suite of developments includes the establishment of Education Scotland from the amalgamation of Learning and Teaching Scotland and HMIE; the Donaldson Review of Teacher Education; the McCormac Review of Teacher Terms and Conditions; and the revision of the GTCS Professional Standards. They can all be seen as elements of the professional and pedagogical jigsaw that needs to fit together in its entirety if CfE is to succeed. Aspects of these developments seem however to indicate some contradictory impulses, including the abolition of the Chartered Teacher Programme (McCormac) alongside the promotion of a Masters level profession (Donaldson). They also carry the danger of further retrenchment on both sides: professional resistance to any further changes on the one hand; and a policy community more wary of engagement and consultation on the other.

The teaching profession sometimes seems to convey a feeling of being besieged between new expectations and old forms of accountability. As one interviewee put it to me, a more self-confident profession would have reacted more effectively; however this begs the questions: how did the profession lose its self-confidence; and how can this self-confidence be rediscovered? My recommendation is that consultation itself ought to be understood and presented as a significant opportunity for professional reflection and development; the quality of consultation and its outcomes is arguably much more important than its quantity and reach.

3. The roles of the different organisations with responsibility for educational policymaking in Scotland should be reviewed and clarified.

Questions of who makes policy are related to two key elements of what Stasz and Wright (2007: p. 164) refer to as the 'implementation context' of a policy, namely

- the choice of organisation(s) to implement the policy, including the capacity and goals of a particular organisation;
- interactions with other policies and organisational functions, including the extent of 'joined up' policy within a particular domain, as well as relationships with the other organisational stakeholders.

One respondent suggested that, in the light of all the institutional changes that have taken place over the period since devolution, there has been an interesting process of watching 'networks fragment and then reform' [E].

It became apparent in the course of my analysis that there is a need to review these institutions in the light of experiences on CfE. In particular, the accounts of the operation of the strategic Partnership that I described in Chapter Four suggest that there remain deep-seated concerns about the balance and distribution of power, expertise and responsibilities across the major policymaking organisations. Furthermore, too much in the Scottish approach seems to be implicit and unsaid; there is a substantial gap in awareness and perception between those who are part of the policy community and those

who are not (in the latter category I would include the vast majority of the teaching profession in Scotland).

There remains a general lack of clarity about the precise roles of the different key institutions in relation to policymaking (see also Humes, 2008). Some interviewees suggested (prior to the establishment of Education Scotland) that LTS ought to return to a more creative, 'blue skies' role in relation to policy, rather than being seen as the major vehicle for awareness raising and support for implementation. Others suggested that the clear demarcation of HMIE's roles as inspector and policy leaders that was established in the post-2000 era has gradually been eroded. The establishment of Education Scotland if anything further blurs the lines of responsibility by combining in one institution the potentially conflicting interests of curriculum development and evaluation. This was precisely the situation that the post 2000 reforms had sought to address. Such a role might be justified if the evaluation regime that the organisation is wedded to is predicated on a reprofessionalised and more autonomous schools system adopting a more self-evaluative framework. In other words, if the recent shift in tone and practice continues, there might be a more persuasive rationale for the dual roles within one organisation.

Institutions with a system wide perspective, such as HMIE (and now Education Scotland) will always hold an advantage, and will inevitably be looked to for advice when it comes to systemic changes (Raffe et al, 2002: p181). This might, almost by default and despite the best of intentions, promote a tendency to a 'top-down' model of implementation, creating further tensions in the system.

There also appears to be a constriction in the capacity of the Scottish educational system to foster new thinking and expertise in policymaking. The transition from SCCC to LTS, and subsequently to Education Scotland, endangers this further. The contraction in the University sector, including significant cuts to the capacity of the former 'Colleges of Education', mean that alongside the other stakeholders there has been a diminution in institutional memory on all sides, and a dilution in the clarity of roles.

As one respondent put it to me, the need for such clarity is vital:

‘...for the future of Scottish education to be absolutely clear what does SQA do, what do LTS do, what do HMI do and what do the Department do. Because of all the confusion things don’t happen then and they happen very, very poorly. Scottish education deserves better. And it is a strong, strong, point and it was a characteristic and it gave us global respect in generations past that we have lost...How do you make policy decisions? How do we learn from the best and from the past that perhaps disappeared with devolution? And how the hell do you get implementation right with confusion on roles and responsibilities among the education bodies?’ [J].

Beyond the four Partners with central responsibilities for CfE, there is also a need to review the role of other organisations that can contribute to the policy process, including the professional associations, parents’ organisations, the wider education sector, and so on. These perspectives are sometimes incorporated in the policy arena, as was the case with George MacBride’s role in CfE, although as some argued this was an exceptional situation. On other occasions, and with other individuals, the contribution of professional associations might well inhibit more radical thinking. On the other hand, these bodies have legitimacy in the system on behalf of their membership, so it is hard to see how future policy could be made without their engagement.

One respondent suggested that, in future, the kind of policy approach based on wider engagement might no longer be politically desirable, due to the changing nature of the Scottish system:

‘I actually don’t think there is going to be a similar group set up for quite a long time to come because I think now some of the big organisations have begun to realise that these groups don’t always serve their needs best and that it’s better dealing directly with the Minister than civil servants; LTS, HMIE, SQA, ADES, SLS – I think that they have now realised that access these Ministers and have

direct relationships. I think that in a sense may be a pity because the grass roots or the more kind of unrepresented aspects of the policy community whether it's parents or pupils or teachers may not have their own views represented all that well other than through these big monolithic organisations' [C]

Another respondent felt that the CfE process had instead demonstrated that 'old habits of policy making die hard' [E].

4. Procedures should be put in place to promote greater continuity of staff and institutions involved in the core development and delivery of major policy initiatives in Scottish education.

As Raffe notes (2009: p. 28), the:

'frequent restructuring of policy-making institutions, and the mobility of people who staff them, make it hard to accumulate policy memory'.

There are at least two forms of 'policy memory' that could enhance the effectiveness of policymaking in Scottish education. The first relates to a sophisticated understanding of the Scottish educational system, including the genealogy of policy and practice. The second relates to an ability to navigate the very particular policy community that exists around Scottish education.

The issue of civil service (and other policy community) mobility has emerged in this study as a negative factor in the CfE development. However it is difficult to see a way forward that bridges the gap between the civil service culture that places a value on mobility, and the views of external stakeholders who find this mobility frustrating or obstructive to the effectiveness of policymaking. A number of internal civil service reviews and audit exercises (Scottish Executive, 2004; Howat Report, 2006: p.23) have recognised that the phenomenon is not welcomed by partners, but there appears to be little change in response. Nonetheless, my recommendation would be that this issue merits further research to establish whether it does in fact impede the implementation of

large scale policies that can only realistically be put in place over a timescale that exceeds the typical longevity of appointment.

It might be that any significant policy proposal could be accompanied with a statement on the projected timescale and staffing load associated with a long term work plan for policy delivery. Staff could be identified from existing internal teams as well as cross-departmental recruitment, on the understanding that a period of stability would be required. Staying in post for an extended period of time, together with an assessment of the effectiveness of the contribution to implementation, could form the basis of a recognition and reward process.

5. The procedures for policymaking should be clarified, formalised and made more transparent in the same way as legislative procedures were reviewed as part of the devolution settlement.

A significant procedural concern that has emerged in this study was the limited visibility of any baseline studies, benchmarking and monitoring of progress in relation to CfE. The previous assumption may have been that HMIE would fulfil this role through inspections and reports; this seems both an inadequate methodology, and inappropriate given the shift in the balance of powers which has seen HMIE merge with the main curriculum development body. In order to establish the relative success of a policy implementation, a clear baseline as well as clear objectives have to be evident from the outset. However recent experience suggests that Scottish education is perhaps not geared up for such an approach (Audit Scotland, 2006).

It has also become apparent during this study that the notions of *policy* and *legislation* are rarely disaggregated, both by politicians and commentators alike. However the *procedural* distinction between the two has significant implications for the nature of educational policymaking in Scotland. Interestingly, no such confusion or lack of clarity exists within the civil service itself; indeed it is often configured accordingly in

organisational terms with distinct sections dealing with each. This confusion emerged in relation to the issue of class sizes, a key policy priority of the incoming SNP administration in 2007. However, because this *policy* was not underpinned by *legislation*, a number of parents successfully challenged schools and local authorities that sought to exclude their children on the basis that a class maximum had been reached. In this case, parental rights around placing requests, enshrined in law, had far greater weight than mere ‘policy’.

As a result of this ongoing confusion the advent of the Scottish Parliament and devolution have perhaps had a more limited impact than might have been expected. In some respects, the formal procedures for policymaking (as opposed to legislation) retain many of the characteristics of the pre-devolution approach that took place under the arrangements for ‘administrative devolution’ described in Chapter 2, thus representing minimum change despite the ambitions for enhanced procedures in the post-devolution context.

In the light of the experience of the development of CfE described in this study, one possible route to more radical educational change would be for curriculum to become a statutory component in the system, underpinned with legal status. However this might be perceived as contrary to Scottish education traditions, and might well be resisted within and outwith the system. A perhaps more palatable intermediate step would be the establishment of a clearer framework for policymaking that has an explicit standardised process, in much the same way as any proposed legislation in Parliament has to follow certain predetermined stages. Also embedded in the policy process could be a stronger governmental commitment to policy learning through research that can feed into the deliberative processes outlined earlier.

Having presented these recommendations, I will conclude this submission with the observation that undertaking this study has presented a range of challenges: personal, professional, and intellectual. The rewards have already been felt in my professional capacity for analysis, and the more research-informed nature of some of my teaching and

CPD activities. I have also been able to apply some of the learning from this process directly in the policy arena through my involvement with the Scottish Government working group on One Planet Schools/Learning for Sustainability (Scottish Government One Planet Schools, online). In this context I applied my understanding of the different institutional components of the policy architecture in ways that I hope helped to contribute to more effective development and presentation of policy. I hope that I can continue to develop my understanding of these critical themes and pursue further research in this field.

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APPENDIX 1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Core Interview questions	
1.	What has been your role in relation to the development of CFE?
	At what stage in the process did you become involved?
	Who invited you?
2.	What remit does your organisation have in educational policymaking in Scotland?
	How does it relate to/communicate with other organisations in Scottish education?
3.	Which other institutions have been most closely involved? Why do you think they have been involved?
4.	Could you summarise in a few sentences what CFE is seeking to achieve?
5.	To what extent have you been aware of consultation and engagement procedures taking place around the development of CFE?
	Have you contributed to these procedures?
	What impact or changes have been prompted by consultation procedures?
6.	What do you think are the key underlying drivers of the development of CFE?
	Political?
	Ideological?
	Economic?
	Educational/pedagogical?
	National/Global?
	Others?
7.	Where has the institutional drive towards CFE emerged from?
8.	What aspects of the <i>development</i> and <i>implementation</i> of CFE would you regard as most effective?
9.	What aspects of the <i>development</i> and <i>implementation</i> of CFE would you regard as least effective?
10	To what extent do you think that there is an open culture around Scottish educational policy making more broadly?

11. To what extent do you think policymaking in Scottish education is consciously research informed?
12. Has political change, e.g. election of SNP Government, changed the focus of the development?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEWS: CODING THE RESPONSES

Section 1

Interview Code	Role	Consultation	The Partnership	Other Institutions	Change of government	Openness	Values
A	3	0 fluid; rapid change	- Unequal	?	+ Initial uncertainty then greater drive	?	0 - ? + ?
B	1, 2, 4	?	0 LTS and SQA didn't see themselves as partners	0	+	+	? 0 0 + +
C	1,4	- Review Group doc not consultative; engagement poorly defined, overstated claims on engagement	- HMIE, SQA Lack of clarity	- "dark forces", ADESSs, SLS	- Created further hiatus	+ Less ideological debate in RG Subtler civil service control than in the past -shifting locus of power towards the big 4; direct access to Minister	- - - +
D	3 +?	+ reaching out to stakeholders; practitioner involvement in developing Es and Os.	+ partnership essential; some tensions	+	+ Added momentum	+ Different, better ways of doing govt/better structures. More post 2007 rather than post 1999	+ + + +
E	1,4	- Process more akin to taking the temperature rather than genuine engagement on first principles	- Unequal/imbalanced. HMIE recuperated policy role by offering stability and expertise. LTS and SQA less effective	- Parents, Business and industry not a clue what's going on	-? Shock to the system of SNP administration. System took advantage of naivety of new administration	+ Greater accessibility and accountability/oversight. SP involvement in process, eg ECSC. Still have a corporatist approach rather than pluralist though "the big battalions"	- - - +
F	4	+ Involved in engagement around subject group developments	- Lack of clarity about HMIE role; retained power in the system. Lack of clarity about role of LTS	?	- Less funding for LTS	+ More open; subject to scrutiny; more responsive	+ - ? - +
G	1,2?, 3	+ Makes sense to involve people. Relatively pacy reform and consultation process. Intense engagement of stakeholders	+ Each Partner had legitimacy in roles. SEED as leaders, setting the overall direction.	?	+ More pace and vigour; greater emphasis on change management; reinvigoration of Programme Management Board	+ Avoided sterile ideological debates at outset	+ + ? + +
H	1, 2, 3	+ Emphasised engagement rather than consultation. Big impact on Es and Os. Lots of events; area advisers	+ Working closer than ever	+ Worked with different orgs, including subject associations, CBI, SYP etc.	+ Increased pace; Govt is "in a hurry"	+ It's a small country; SLF teachers can access Ministers directly Pluralist system: multiple agencies influence policy and practice; multiple layers of governance; cultural belief in the democratic intellect; FOI culture; not complacent; A	+ + + +

I	2, 3	See comments and coding above: joint interview without transcript therefore unable to separate comments				research indicative of openness.
J	1, 2, 3	- Limited consultation. A lot presented as faits accomplis. Lots of engagement but people emerged from meetings "none the wiser". Lack of clarity and precision about the proposals	- Very critical of implementation and lack of clarity and leadership by key institutions; a weakened LTS, HMIE doing "more than they should have done". Untidy implementation plan led to a slow process. Tensions between sub-groups because of lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities	- Other institutions represented on Programme Board but lacking strategic focus. Used informal networks too.	+ Led to new sense of urgency; problem solving mentality at Scottish Government; Colin Mclean brought in.	- Preferred previous balance of power between key institutions, and clarity of roles, e.g. SCCC strong on policy development
K	2, 4	0 Certainly discussed in Programme Board; but failure of Register of Interest to be utilised effectively; led to disillusionment. Some key issues crept into the development without consultation, e.g. the division between junior and senior phases. Some resistance to notion of young people being consulted.	- Partnership was not always represented at sufficiently high level in strategic discussions; began with Chief Executives but level dropped subsequently. HMIE probably the most influential to begin with. Might have expected them to have a more marginal role post SQA. SQA itself less involved initially. LTS relatively low key. Scottish education is run on a partnership approach, but not a partnership of equals.	0 LAs have power and influence in the overall system yet only limited operational autonomy.	+ Sought ongoing support and leadership from Minister in collective Programme Board letter after election 2007, and obtained this.	+ Wouldn't exaggerate the early enthusiasm of 1999, but quite a few good early steps, e.g. Committee enquiries, National Debate. Subsidised a bit since then. Relapsed into narrower (pre-devolution) model of participation in policymaking. Models of curriculum development have become more participative irrespective of devolution.
L	1, 2,3	+ "multi-layered, complex approach to the involvement of the profession."	+ Legitimate and necessary; obvious partners. Professionals wanted to know what these organisations were thinking	0 Some comment about failure to engage fully with LAs.	+ Some concerns beforehand, but consensus was maintained	+ Doing things differently post devolution. In old days people were "given something and told here is the guidance and now implement it."
M	X	? Not involved directly in process. Noted that	? ?	0 Core partners plus ADES, SLS. New	? ?	+ Up until about 2004 things were beginning to change, but reached realisation that major

		consultation post devolution had been e(too?) extensive e.g. SSSA 2000. More sophisticated protocols now		forces include Employers and private sector; more 'outsiders' generally		consultation is time consuming and expensive. "we haven't fully lived up to the promises that were made in the run up to devolution." "our system is not very democratic, it's not very egalitarian, it is less open than it claims to be and why we still subscribe to this set of myths is a bit of a mystery"	
N	1, 2, 3	<p>+</p> <p>Various forms of engagement. Es and Os "most substantial kind of exercise in working with staff on any piece of curriculum development in Scotland" Every publication has had associated reflective engagement activities. Not "old fashioned cascade". Led to major changes in Es and Os</p>	+	<p>+</p> <p>Variable involvement of Universities and Colleges; ADES, GTC and Professional Associations</p>	+	<p>+</p> <p>"heartened by the extent of cross party support for CfE. New govt underwent "stock-taking"; a reaffirmation of where to go"; trajectory changed somewhat, plus concordats changed relationships with LAs. Natural impatience with progress.</p>	<p>+</p> <p>Some things have to be done less openly "because of the very high political stakes that there are"..but "where people can be open about things I think it's working and working pretty well". Pos devolution we have Ministers who are "very interested in offering detail...so they are pretty interested and actively engaged in what is going on.</p>
O	1?, 2, 3	<p>+</p> <p>Detailed proposals emerged from broad engagement. Ill-defined curricula can be colonised by textbooks or SQA/equivalent</p>	-	?	?	<p>+</p> <p>Need to balance professionalism (standards and expectations) with democratic/participative agenda. The State has a responsibility to young people around standards. It is a brave move to surrender the levers of control. The 'educated Scot' is not the product of a free for all.</p>	<p>+</p> <p>-</p> <p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>+</p>
Totals for values where appropriate							

Codes by involvement

Role	Consultation	The Partnership	Other Institutions	Most effective	Less effective	Change of Govt	Openness/different from past
1 Review Group	Positive (+)	Positive (+)	Positive (+)			Positive (+)	Positive (+)
2 Other management group (PB, MG)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)			Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)
3 Rep of 4 Partners	Negative (-)	Negative (-)	Negative (-)			Negative (-)	Negative (-)
4 External	Not covered/unclear (?)	Not covered/unclear (?)	Not covered/unclear (?)			Not covered/unclear (?)	Not covered/unclear (?)
X Not directly involved							

APPENDIX 3 INTERVIEWS: CODING THE RESPONSES

Section 2

Interview Code	Role	Continuity/Civil Service	Establishment of subject groups	Research informed
A	3	?	?	?
B	1, 2, 4	0 Had been good post 1999 which allowed relationships to develop. Still limited joined up thinking across “silos” in SE.	0 Desire not to frighten the profession too much. Took on a life of their own. Some drift after first (Science) drafts emerged.	0 Driven more by ND, although some elements of research went on; interesting focus on curriculum areas rather than overall process.
C	1,4	0 Civil service were continuity at transition from RG to PB	?	+ Review Group provided with some background papers on reforms elsewhere. Research informed rather than research led
D	3 +?	+ Some continuity in process in shape of key individuals. Civil service proficient in policy development	+ Progress and Proposals was an effective distillation of Programme Board thinking on this.	0 Some policy learning from elsewhere but has not been prominent in the process.
E	1,4	0 Reasonable continuity in the beginning, but thereafter changes in personnel	- Review Group would have felt that subject groups was “the wrong way to go”	+ Built upon the ND research; also the commissioned research. Renewed interest in research from policymakers.
F	4	?	0 Probably necessary especially in secondary sector, but perhaps limited the commitment to ‘decluttering’.	+ CfE trying to make clear that process is underpinned by research both in terms of content and process. GU report highlighted
G	1,2?, 3	+ CS expertise in policy enactment	+ Definitely not “dumping subjects” Not dismantling the whole thing.	+ Elements of policy learning.
H	1, 2, 3	- Not at middle level, but at Philip Rycroft level. Lack of clarity within CS about their role. <i>Can be either “anally retentive” or laissez faire</i>	+ - Needed to start with something - Avoid frightening teachers (more effective model of change) - Non-threatening - Not a paradigm change	?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pragmatic – existing structures and training framework - Relevance to local authority context. 	
I	2, 3			
J	1, 2, 3	- Very critical of civil service churn	- “in the capacities you broke away from the traditional architecture of Scottish education. “ Hadn’t thought this through. Lack of clarity and consistency of approach across the subject groups.	- Not very prominent
K	2, 4	- Worried about the churn. Policy model requires sophisticated understanding; quite hard for a civil servant to come in and get a feel for this quickly.	- Subject Areas were initially regarded as provisional categories and referred to as ‘curriculum organisers’, “.with hindsight there were all sorts of things that we did wrong; we did not go through a serious sustained process of trying to work out why we did it that way, what the rationale was for fixing on those areas.” Subject groups themselves brought together in ad hoc manner.	+ “Genuine concern to try to make the process as research informed as possible, although what I don’t think that extended to was in a sense going back to square one and saying does research suggest this is a sensible thing to be doing.”
L	1, 2,3	+ PR was very effective as a non-specialist. Colin Brown became a specialist and a vital point of continuity	?	+ Lots of policy learning. Also research on change management.
M	X	?	?	+ “I think it is more research informed than it used to be but governments still maintain the right to do what they want to do almost regardless of the evidence.”
N	1, 2, 3	0 Need to balance generic skills of CS with specialist partners and effective relationships “we can’t expect the civil service pattern	+ “you can’t just have a great big pot full of expectations for youngsters and they do naturally fall into certain headings”. Hopefully the controversy has diminished over time. “The work that has been done there we have been	? ?

<p>O</p>	<p>1?, 2, 3</p> <p>-</p> <p>Key policy 'transactions' take place within Victoria Quay. Inspectors had a cognate civil service/counterparts, but this became dislocated, therefore they (CS) lacked professional advice and input. This was gradually re-established. However you have to start again with each new CS appointee; there is a constant renegotiation of boundaries. The CS didn't always seek professional advice; they relied on intuitive/common sense approaches instead.</p>	<p>very careful to avoid people thinking that these are columns for timetables and actually that seems to be kind of working, people are not seeing it like that."</p> <p>+</p> <p>Subject areas about creating the scaffolding; need to relate CfE to what was already familiar/where the profession was at; about reassurance. Involved aspects of compromise and a slight struggle for consensus.</p>	<p>?</p>
<p>Totals for values where appropriate</p>			

**APPENDIX 4
(2004)**

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM REVIEW GROUP

Name	Organisational affiliation as described in the Review Group publication
Philip Rycroft	Chair, Head of Schools Group, Scottish Executive Education Department
Jim Anderson	Director of Education, Angus Council
Mike Baughan	Chief Executive, Learning and Teaching Scotland (now retired)
Keir Bloomer	Chief Executive, Clackmannanshire Council
Brian Boyd	Language Education, University of Strathclyde
Jean Campbell	Headteacher, Glendale Primary School, Glasgow
Anton Colella	Chief Executive, Scottish Qualifications Authority
Val Cox	Head of Early Education and Childcare Division, Scottish Executive Education Department
Judith Gillespie	Development Manager, Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Graham Hyslop	Principal, Langside College, Glasgow
Linda Kinney	Head of Children's Services, Stirling Council
Bill Maxwell	Chief Inspector, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
George McBride	Principal Teacher – Support for Learning, Govan High School, Glasgow
Bernard McLeary	Chief Executive, Learning and Teaching Scotland
Iain McMillan	Director, CBI Scotland
Wilma Miller	School Board Chair, Dumfries High School
Pamela Munn	Head of the Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh
Dick Staite	Headteacher, Beeslack Community High School, Penicuik
Gill Robinson	Head of Qualifications, Assessment and Curriculum Division, Scottish Executive Education Department

APPENDIX 5 CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME
BOARD MEMBERS

Name	Designation
Maggi Allan OBE	Chair of CfE Programme Board
Dr Gill Robinson	Programme Director, <i>A Curriculum for Excellence</i> , Scottish Executive
Isabel Bolton	Headteacher, Kingswells Primary School, Aberdeen
Anton Colella	Chief Executive, Scottish Qualifications Authority
George MacBride	Principal Teacher, Support For Learning, Govan High School, Glasgow
Chris McIlroy	HM Chief Inspector, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
Mary McLaughlin	Headteacher, Notre Dame High School, Glasgow
Bernard McLeary	Chief Executive, Learning & Teaching Scotland
Professor David Raffe	Director of Research, School of Education, University of Edinburgh
Kate Reid	Director of Education & Cultural Services, West Lothian Council

Source: SEED (2006).

APPENDIX 6: ATTENDANCE AT INAUGURAL CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE MANAGEMENT BOARD (29 August 2008, Victoria Quay)

Name	Role	Body
Colin MacLean	Director, Schools	Scottish Government (Chair)
Forbes Mitchell	Head of Service, Education & Communities	SOLACE
John Burt (Sub)	Principal and Chief Executive of Angus College	ASC
Marie Allan	Convenor of Education/ Holy Rood High School	SSTA
Ronnie Summers	Headteacher, Musselburgh Grammar School	SLS
Irene Matier	Caledonia Primary School	AHDS
Myra Pearson	Head of School of Education, University of Aberdeen	Deans of Education Faculties/ Departments
Janet Brown	Chief Executive	SQA
Christine Pollock	Executive Director of Learning and Leisure Services, North Lanarkshire Council	ADES
David Cameron	Director of Children's Services, Stirling Council	ADES
Christine Carlin	Deputy Director, Qualifications, Assessment & Skills	Scottish Government
Alison Coull	Deputy Director, Curriculum	Scottish Government
Claire Monaghan	Deputy Director, Curriculum (from 8 September)	Scottish Government
Graham Donaldson	Senior Chief Inspector	HMIE
John Ireland	Deputy Director, Education Analytical Services	Scottish Government
Larry Flanagan	Education Convenor, EIS/ Hillhead High School	EIS
Bernard McLeary	Chief Executive	LTS

Source:

http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/Management Board Meeting290808_tcm4-508175.pdf