**The 2014 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. Old ideology into new policy straight jackets?**

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Through the employment of the theoretical lens of embodiment and by focussing on just three words this article reveals the Foucauldian docile body manufactured within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 (SENCoP). In problematizing the concepts of support, employment and independence we seek to upend this docile body juxtaposing such against the active ‘non-productive’ disabled body. We conclude that this Code is riven with ideological assumptions which act as straightjacket to the location, form and function of the body. As *Their* body becomes over coded by a Conservative work ethic everybody’s body is graded and sorted by its ability to make a positive contribution to *Their* society.

**Introduction**

In 2010 the then leader of the opposition government, David Cameron, announced that a fundamental change in the education for children labelled as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was needed. Cameron believed that inclusion should no longer be the sole object of either educational policy or provision in our schools. Some four years later, on the 13th of March 2014, Cameron’s government received Royal Assent for its ‘landmark’ Children’s and Families Act. The Government stated that this legislation and its associated SENCoP would offer greater protection and support for children. In addition, Cameron detailed that ideology would no longer dominate policy and that, therefore, educational provision would no longer be dominated by inclusive ideology.

In this article we want to analyse, problematize and rematerialize this policy by examining its SENCoP through the lens of embodiment. We aim to interrogate and reveal the ‘bodypolitics’ which are contained within, and which we believe contaminate, this educational policy. Like Gale and Molla (2015) we believe this policy, like all government policies, cannot be read simply. It is multi-layered and in its folds, contours, cracks and crevices it contains, constrains and constructs privilege as well as dispossession through (re) enforcing marginality and exclusion. Unlike Cameron, it seems, we believe policies do not exist in a social vacuum but are always undergirded by ideology, assumptions, values and misrepresentations (Armstrong, 2000). Educational policies, we suggest colonise practice with an over coding machine (see Hodkinson, 2013 & Deluze and Guattari, 1987) that collapses and closes down a ‘multitude of oscillations’ (Chiesa, 2009, p. 24) so bringing ‘homogeneity to the heterogeneous’ (Golberg, 2000, p. 84). Like Giroux (1993) we believe that policies construct and re-construct cultural scripts by a sanctification of the dominant discourse. As such they are ‘linguistically, deployed panoptic technologies of power’ (Liasidou, 2008, p. 408) which concretalise ‘declarations of desirability’ (Gale & Molla, 2015).

To us, then, policy is taken to mean a ‘calculated deployment of techniques and artefacts to organise human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power’ (Ball, 2003, p. 215). These ‘essential techniques’, as Foucault proposes in his book, *Discipline and Punish*, work to produce ‘subjected and practiced bodies, “docile bodies”’ (Foucault, 1991, p. 138). More specifically, he puts forward three techniques: *the art of distribution, the control of activity, and the organisation of geneses* in an attempt to articulate disciplinary techniques of the body. These techniques, according to Markula & Pringle (2006, p. 41) are concerned with ‘controlling the location of individuals and the production of work- via manipulation of space or architecture, theorganisation of time (e.g. rigid timetables) and the use of graduated, repetitive and systematised “exercises” to help produce docile but productive bodies’. If one applies this premise to the Children and Families Act and its SENCoP, they become but cultural scripts which solidify a story that has spatial, temporal and historical dimensions. Within such scripts ‘linguistic predilections of single words [become] purveyors of subjugation’ (Liasidou, 2008, p. 488). Following Allan (2007) we read this policy with the recognition of the political nature of language and how, in Foucauldian terms, policies freeze in aspic ‘contemporaneous biopolitics [and] the politics of life itself’ (Done *et. al*, 2015, p. 867).

This article through the employment of critical discourse analysis (CDA) aims to ‘focus on exploration of the use of language [and] the power of language,’ as it is through the language of policy that the education of all our children is constructed (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 198). We draw out the ways in which the 2014 SEND CoP details their political investment of the body (Foucault, 1991) by revealing the discursive ‘capitalisation of flesh’ that attempts to make the body ‘a phenomenon that could be utilised, altered and developed, to best serve the economic interests of the state’ (Campbell, 2013, p. 28, 24). That is, we centre on the attempted production of docile and productive bodies to delineate the resistance of disabled bodies as they push against the limited ‘bodypolitics’ that the coalition government have put forward.

**SEN and disability policy**

The developments and regressions of SEN policy are rhizomatically sketched, entailing a messy and ambiguous journey with no definitive beginning or end. However, when SEN policy is levied against competing ideologies and imagined within medicalized political responses, its rhizomatic development is halted, supplanted to a system of categorization. As a culture, it is perhaps comforting to buy into the belief that our education system has moved far beyond the exclusion of children based upon the categories of ‘educationally sub-normal’ and ‘maladjusted’ (See Hodkinson, 2016). However, there is a wealth of literature suggesting that the progression of educational provision is not as advanced as we like to think (See Armstrong, 2005; Penketh, 2014; Runswick-Cole, 2011; Terzi, 2008). While these specific labels no longer exist in educational discourse, we now have a system built upon the categorisation of ‘special educational needs’. For many, this linguistic replacement continues a structure of education that locates difficulty and deficit within the individual (Slee, 2011; Vlachou, 2004). Problematised by Hodge & Runswick-Cole (2011). Moreover, the expression of SEN is argued to have taken on the negative assumptions (Norwich, 2012) that were prominent in its ancestral discourses. Now broken down into the areas of ‘communication and interaction’, ‘cognition and learning’, ‘social, emotional and mental health difficulties’, and ‘sensory and/or physical needs’, such categorization is inherently problematic. According to Penketh (2014, p. 1488), these categories ‘give little to inspire teachers to celebrate diversity with children described via paragraphs of deficit’ and bring to question how effectively ‘radical’ the coalition’s education policy really is.

In addition to a system based upon individual deficit, misdirected conceptions of inclusion have resulted in a highly segregated education system, simply coated under the rhetorical guise of inclusive practice. Since the election of a New Labour government in 1997, inclusion has become part of an education agenda towards equality and opportunity (Armstrong, 2005), most notably associated with the inclusion of children labelled with SEN in the mainstream classroom (See DfEE, 1998; DfES, 2001a; HMSO, 2001). For Bines (2000), while this political shift demonstrated a welcoming development, it was burdened by traditional assumptions of deficit in addition to raising conflicts in New Labour’s education agenda. Alongside inclusion, New Labour committed to a series of education policies they intended would create a ‘Britain equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological changes’ (Labour Party, 1997, p. 3) via the transformation of Britain’s knowledge and skills (DfES, 2001). For Smithers (2001), New Labour’s commitment to make inclusion a twin goal alongside competition in education was a credulous attempt, and swiftly undermined any commitment to inclusive educational provision (Ainscow et al, 2006; Hodkinson, 2010). As explained by Runswick-Cole (2011), New Labour’s agenda for inclusion very quickly perished under the strains and pressures of the standards agenda. Since David Cameron’s call to ‘prevent the unnecessary closure of special schools and remove the bias towards inclusion’ (HM Government, 2010, p. 29) this conflict has been further diminished and a practical and discursive move away from inclusion confirmed. We may therefore be skeptical of claims that ‘the most vulnerable children deserve the very highest quality of care’ (HM Government, 2010, p. 29) when such a claim is positioned within an educational climate devoted to changing the individual, not the damaged system.

The 2014 Children and Families Act legislated, in their words, to ‘improve services for vulnerable children and to support strong families’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 1). The legislation’s central aim was to ‘underpin wider reforms to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 1). Coupled with this legislation, a revised SENCoP provided statutory guidance of how the duties, policies and procedures contained in Part 3 of the Children and Families Bill should be operationalised. The Code’s guiding principle was an ‘increased expectation of effective partnerships with parents’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 67) and that the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parents were taken into account. Speaking in relation to these new measures, Timpson the Children’s minister, stated: ‘It’s a radical overhaul that breaks down artificial barriers, and that champions children with SEN as never before from birth right through to adulthood’ (see Hodkinson, 2016a). Whilst Cameron determined that policy and provision should, quite rightly, not be driven by ideology we argue that in championing ‘children with SEN as never before’ this government had returned to an entrenched Conservative ideology. This cultural script had implications for what was observed to be ‘body perfect’ and was one we believe attempted to embody the disabled body within an ideological straightjacket.

If history teaches us anything about SEN and disability policy it is this - it is always complex and it centres on entrenched societal views which ‘compare, contrast and normalise children’ (Liasidou, 2008, p. 488). It is possible to state that the Children’s and Family Bill and SENCoP perhaps likewise have been ‘susceptible to the normalising technologies of power’ (Liasidou, 2008, p. 488). We, though, do not necessarily take such normalisation as wholly negative. Rather, we accept Ball’s premise that policy solidifies ‘meanings, values and assumptions’ of those who hold power (Ball, 2003, p. 215). Policies, therefore, are not ‘simple instruments’ but usefully offer frames of reference for questions of who we are or what *They* would like us to become (Dean, 1995, p. 581). Like Pels (1997, p. 168) we want to ‘better understand the relevant context of specific utterings and symbols’. By analysing and ‘ironizing these master narratives’ (Funari *et. al.,* 1999, p. 17) we want to reveal conceptual incongruities, linguistic traps and how the dynamics of cultural scripts work within the classical economy of language, representation and institutional structure (Liadisou, 2008). We examine policy therefore, through its dominant discourse and interrogate how their codification selects and constructs some children as the Other (Giroux, 1993). To put it simply, we seek to ‘focus surveillance [back] onto the dominant groups sense of self’ and reveal their notions of what body ‘types’ educational systems should produce for the future ‘good’ of society (Chapman *et. al*., 1989, p. 19). As these ideological brandings scold and sculpt docile bodies, the disabled body, we suggest, becomes a site of possible resistance.

**Embodiment**

Within westernised industrialised societies, everybody, indeed everybody’s body, is manufactured within varying but distinct regimes (Foucault, 1971). The catalyst to such processes may be defined by power and its relationship to the individual’s body. It is argued (See Foucault, 1971 & 1978) that such power is woven into every individual inserting ‘itself into actions, attitudes, discourses, learning processes and everyday lives’ (Foucault 1978, p. 31). For Gramsci (1971), Marx and Engels (1965), power in such processes should be read simply as capitalism- an ideology which seeks to produce a docile labouring and controlled body. A body whose ‘social skin’ (Low, 2003, p. 70) is a surface upon which society brands its bigotry, stereotypes, ideologies, values and assumptions. The body then becomes an ‘intellectual text’ in which we might read the ‘ideological assumptions of social systems’ (Meekosha, 1998, p. 122). Reading of these ‘lived through experiences’ and meanings (Iwakuma, 2002, p. 78) brings us to the place that Ponty (1962) named as embodied space. In this space the body is reformed as an object of intellectual inquiry (Iwakuma 2002). Here its surface, its skin, becomes a frontier, a mirror (see Hodkinson, 2016b) to society, reflecting a contested boundary between the *Them*, the *They* and *Their* representations of the Other. Within such border disputes the phemenological perspectives of the combatants enabled Ponty (1962) to define and operationalise the concept of embodiment. In summary, Low (2000, p. 70) details that embodied space locates ‘human experiences and consciousness’ and defines how the body is regulated and represented in such spaces (Hughes & Patterson, 1997, p. 38).

In our employment of embodiment, however, we are mindful, of Giddens (1991, p. 40) perspective that it is individuals as well who protect their own ‘ontological security’. Bodies, are not always rendered as ‘passive entities upon which power brands its own images’ (Meekosha, 1998, p. 172). Indeed, we wish to argue against such simplistic formulations which pitch docile bodies against ‘disabled’ bodies, inscribing them as ‘without agency’. To this end we find interest and utility in Low’s (2000, p. 70) definition of embodied space. Here space is occupied by a body that has ‘perceptions and experiences . . . [which] contract and expand in relationships [between] a person’s emotion and state of mind [and] sense of self, social relations and cultural predispositions’. Through the employment of embodied space, in this form, we seek to demonstrate how SENCoP re awakens age old controversies between ‘productive’ and ‘non-productive’ bodies (Mitchell & Synder, 2015). We wish to analyse how shifts in policy discourse appear to sanction the creation of a perfect body; a docile compliant and productive body and thereby diminish the location and rights of some ‘disabled bodies’. By first revealing and then problematizing such ablest discourses we wish to highlight unresolved issues which constitute the boundary between the *Them*, the *They* and the Other. The question we ask, therefore, is what sort of body do *They* wish to create and how, if at all, does the disabled body- an active, beautiful and powerful body – fit with the manufactured docile and seemingly powerless body exemplified by technological, capitalist and commodified societies?

**Methods**

In this paper we employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) to unveil the political and contextual messages and values hidden beneath the fabrications contained in SENCoP (Fairclough, 2013; Rogers, 2004; Taylor, 2004). CDA is an interrogative, problem-oriented and interdisciplinary method that offers a space for a systematic critical analysis which examines how ‘language *works* within [the] power relations’ of policy discourse (Taylor, 2004, p. 436). Moving beyond a description of linguistic structure and towards an exploration of the power relations inherent to specific discourse (Fairlcough, 1992), CDA focuses on the dialectical relationship between discourse, society and culture (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Our starting point, then, is that policies, through embodiment, entrench control, judgement and regulation of populations (Ball, 2012). By employing CDA to tease out linguistic entrapments we draw out the use and abuse of power within this policy discourse (Grue, 2015; Van Dijk, 1995). Education policy, we suggest, ‘has become the instrument through which knowledgeable experts manage the lives of disabled people’ (Slee, 2001, p. 389). It steers the behaviour and actions of those that it oversees (Razvi & Lingard, 2010) so that subjected bodies are but a constructed existence of *being;* inhabiting an agonistic space between the discursive and non-discursive (Kendall, 2011). We aim to break through the textual surface of this policy and dismantle the intersectional tensions that *They* attempt to disguise. In so doing we will, through the specific themes of support, independence and employment, seek to uncover the symbolic positioning of bodies that places disability and productivity as dichotomous beings. We seek to reconceptualise what types of bodies the Code is striving to create, and the ways in which disabled bodies are able to actively resist such strict impositions of docility and subservience.

This article, therefore, is written with the explicit purpose of unveiling and confronting the processes of marginalisation that are implicit in policy production. However, we are mindful that CDA requires a sense of self-consciousness (Fairclough, 2015). It is important to state therefore that our positionality is inculcated within the field of disability studies. Our reading of policy will be achieved through such theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the ideological standpoint this field offers. Hence, while this article must be read within the boundaries of its interpretative style, we specifically intend to challenge the assemblage of bodies that are produced, and indeed, not produced by this policy. In this light we unapologetically employ a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ (Grue, 2015, p. 20) towards this policy so that its cultural script may be revealed.

**Just three little words . . .**

Our interpretative approach centred on three phases that observed our reading of SENCoP to develop from ‘naïve understandings through quantitative structural analysis to comprehensive understandings’ (see Stoltz *et. al*., 2016). Our reading constantly moved between examined sections and the totality of the text itself. Our thoughts, therefore, moved from interrogation, through explanation to understanding. Our first read, ‘our naïve understandings’, identified key sections of text that we felt related to the principles laid out by SENCoP. In our second ‘read’ we employed more quantitative methods to highlight words that appeared to form the bedrock of the document. In the final phase we sought to form deeper meanings of SENCoP. This analysis revealed that this Code had a ‘strap line’, a message continually reinforced through dominating themes. In essence SENCoP had an aim which appeared to be based upon an old cultural script. This being that all children should make a successful transition to adulthood. In our reading of SENCoP, adulthood appeared grounded on just three words.

The words that held our analytical focus were ‘support, independence and employment’. These words appeared very early in the document and were continually and consistently surfaced from the denseness of the text. For example, at the beginning of SENCoP in the ministerial forward it states:

‘Children and young people . . . will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. Importantly the aspirations for children and young people will be raised through an increased focus on life outcomes, including employment and greater independence.’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 11)

Employment of analytic software confirmed the significance of the three words to this document. To be specific, support is employed 775 times and was one of the top ten words used by SENCoP. Employment/work/ training employed on 431 occasions and independence was detailed 122 times. Our discussion aims to demonstrate that whatever SENCoP professes about listening to pupils and parent voices and working to fulfil their aspirations, an alternative script is hidden amongst the text. For example:

‘a local authority in England must have regard to the following matters in particular— (a) the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 35)

This policy really aims to support children to develop bodies that are independent and capable of work. Note for example:

‘When agreeing the aspirations, consideration should be given to the child or young person’s aspirations for paid employment, independent living and community participation.’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 164)

We perhaps should not be surprised by the control placed upon children’s aspirations by this government. Although Cameron claimed that special needs and disability provision should not be governed by ideology we contend that SENCoP merely replaces one ideology, inclusion, with another centred upon employment and independence. An analysis of the last six Conservative party manifestos clearly reveals *Their* ideological stance:

*On independence . . .*

‘I believe strongly that you not the Government should be in charge of your life’ (1992)

‘Conservatives believe that a healthy society encourages people to accept responsibility for their own life’ (1997)

‘We will encourage people to take responsibility for themselves and their families’(2001)

‘a more engage nation is one in which we take more responsibility for ourselves…’ (2015)

*And on employment . . .*

‘we have already brought the world of work and the world of schools into closer harmony’ (1992)

‘Although governments cannot create jobs they can help people train and find work’(1997)

‘The best way of helping unemployed people is to get them back to work as quickly as possible’ (2001)

‘we welcome people who want to work hard and make a positive contribution’ (2005)

‘A Conservative government will not accept another generation being consigned to an uncertain future of worklessness and dependency’ (2010)

‘And we will make our economy more inclusive by removing barriers that stop women and disabled people from participating in our workforce’ (2015)

It is with a certain irony that one reads the last quote from the 2015 Conservative Manifesto but it does rather highlight how the ideology of inclusion has literally been substituted by one that is Conservative in nature.

**Support: a false promise and hidden deceit?**

Analysis of SENCoP leaves one in no doubt that for this government ‘support’ is an important component of education of children labelled with SEND. A review of this support reveals that it is subject to conceptual confusion, bizarre usage and whilst we are supposed to believe it is always positive, it does have a much darker side. SENCoP though is not alone in its (over) use of the word support. As Stolz *et. al.* (2006) maintains, support is not a concept in its infancy but is one that from the 1970s (Cohen & June, 1983) has observed its employment dramatically increased (Wordsworth, 2014). The question that surfaces here –is what does support mean in general parlance and in the specificity of this policy?

Etymologically speaking support may be traced back to the Latin ‘*supportatre*’ from sub (below) and *portare* to carry (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). As a verb it arrived in the English language in the late 14th Century as ‘*to hold or prop up’* or from the old French ‘*to tolerate’* (Oxford Dictionary 2016). From the early 15th century its use expanded to become an act of assistance, or of giving aid. Of interest is that from the early 1950’s in general parlance it became a concept in which a service ‘*enabled something to fulfil its function and remain in operation*’ (Oxford Dictionary). Whatever may be said about its origin it is clear that there is a current ‘craze’, ‘urge’ and ‘need’ to support ‘people to do something’ or support people into something’ (Wordsworth 2014). Support, then, is a word that like ‘President Putin or the late Furher is expanding its empire’ (Wordsworth, 2014) and is one that is frequently employed in family care-giving literature (Stolz *et. al.,* 2006). Although we are all born into this ‘world of support’ and as Wordsworth (2014) accounts whilst we might ‘expect support from sports bras’ there is a difference between this support and that which is ‘a notional asset’. Our analysis starts with the premise that we cannot take support in SENCoP literally but that we must make sense of its syntactical wranglings (Berkley, 2010) as a normalising technique that employs a double system of gratification and punishment (Markula &Pringle, 2006).

Support is introduced early in SENCoP, indeed, it forms part of its title and apparently it is ‘Early Support [which] supports the delivery . . . of services for disabled children’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 82). Furthermore, support lies upon a graduated continuum in that whilst some children will require ‘Additional support’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 67), others will have ‘significant needs for support’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 72) and some will encounter ‘specialised longer term support’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 67) provided by ‘specialised support services’. Interestingly, we are told for children to ‘participate in decisions about their support’ (D*f*E 2014, p. 21) they will need support to do so. If things go wrong with their support they may also need support from Independent Supporters (D*f*E, 2014). Moreover, children could be supported by ‘supported employment services’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 73), ‘supported internship, or have support to set up their own businesses’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 125), ‘housing support or careers or advice support’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 134). Children must have support, it seems, to develop ‘supported relationships’ that prepare them effectively for adulthood (D*f*E, 2014, p. 28). However, whatever the support needed it must be ‘evidenced based’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 115) and SENCoP assures us that with the ‘right support’ and ‘advice and support’ or ‘planning and support’ ‘enormous benefits will be brought to individual children’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 123). According to the National Audit Office, quoted in the document, if support is effective and avoids people living in ‘fully supported housing’ and reduces ‘life time support costs,’ we can as a nation save around one million pounds per ‘supported’ person. It does seem rather that SENCoP encourages professionals to support children so that long term support costs can be reduced. Support in this context then becomes a law of diminishing returns that attends to the organisation of geneses that attempts to regulate time, bodies and forces. The more *They* give the more *They* aim to take away.

What SENCoP also reveals is that whilst support is articulated in the positive it also has a much darker side; a side perhaps veiled in neoliberalism, normalcy and the biopolitics of the Victorian work ethic. For example, as early as page 24 SENCoP details that support is only positive if it is of the ‘right kind’. The right kind is that which has the outcomes of ‘getting a job, living independently as possible’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 24) and that which prepares children ‘effectively for adulthood’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 19). Support, we are told, must be ‘family centred’ and should ‘consider the individual family needs’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 85). However, SENCoP advises professionals from the earliest of ages that children needing support must be prepared for adulthood. Whilst children are encouraged to share their aspirations for their future, these must be agreed before support can be put in place. This agreement might only be given if they have considered ‘paid employment, independent living or community participation’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 14). Children then might have a dream of what their future might hold but even their dreams are constrained by Conservative work ideology. Professionals therefore become the jailers to children’s aspirations, reforming them to ensure that all make a positive contribution to society (D*f*E, 2014). Support, then, in this law of diminishing returns cannot be family centred or based entirely on individual needs. Dreams controlled, Orwellian fashion, are surveilled by an over coding machine powered by a Victorian work ethic set to produce docile, normalised units of production. Support here is constrained, curtailed and limited in its outlook and as a cultural script it serves only one Master. Support then is inculcated in docile servitude; managed, reduced and controlled in an organised time-space. But what about those children whose bodies do not, or cannot, fit the Master’s normalising mould?

For children labelled as having ‘behavioural issues’ support becomes altogether much darker. Lexically, metaphorically and literally it is rendered down to ‘holding or propping up, or being carried out’. As the children are psychically held down so the regime is also propped up and supported. Support here then is not a symbiotic relationship, but a gruelling response to the body that does not assist in the control of activity. To be specific, SENCoP details ‘clear processes to support children and how to manage children’s disruptive behaviours so they do not adversely affect other pupils’ education’ (D*f*E, 2014). If a child has an ‘outburst’ in class they may need support from a ‘key helper’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 171). It is interesting here how support transmutes itself as the workers’ designation changes. This ‘helper’ will support the removal of the child from the class or engage in ‘positive handling techniques’ to ‘prevent injury …. or damage to property (D*f*E 2014, p. 176). Support/ help here perhaps does not serve the individual but a ‘greater good’ of conformity, servitude and normalcy. In effect, you may have our support but if you disturb normality you will be supported to be excluded. In this incarnation, support might be considered as nothing less than common assault. This control of the individual through ‘positive support’ is also further highlighted, without irony, later in the document. On page 184 whilst support is detailed as promoting liberty it is also there ‘where appropriate’ to ‘set out restraint procedures’. How is it possible that ‘liberty’ and ‘restraint’ can be coupled together in the same sentence? It becomes plain what SENCoP intends to achieve for children labelled with SEND through support and help. In this law of diminishing returns there is a hidden deceit, a false promise that support will be supportive of the child.

By casting our gaze outside of the current legislation we solidify our argument- an argument that questions the positivity of support or indeed that it is a ‘magic bullet’. (Cohen and Syme, 1985, p. 9). Like Cohen and Syme (1985, p. 9) we wish to problematize such positivity, deeming it to be ‘more an illusion than a reality’. Whilst everyone in their lives utilises the support of others, children with disabilities are more likely to have support thrust on them (Cohen and Syme, 1985). This support though is not always positive it can be negative leading to segregation (Lord & Hutchinson, 2003) and perceptions that the supported is incompetent. Support is also always defined within power relations and traditions of practice which serve to delimit (Clough, 1991). Moreover, support can be unresponsive, disrespectful and destructive in terms of cultural diversity (see Ratamae *et.al.,* 1995). Furthermore, throughout history but especially in the present (as we shall evidence later) punitive reduction or removal of support has often been over painted with the rhetoric of independence and empowerment (Manzurul, 2009).

So we call into question the positivity of support for all children labelled as having SEND (Webster *et. al.,* 2010). Interestingly, Webster *et. al.* (2010) suggest that whilst SEN support has a positive influence on teacher stress and workload there appears to be little evidence that it has any significant influence on academic progress (see also Mahmoud & Farrell 2003; Humphry & Symes, 2011). Indeed, support in some instances actually leads to less direct support from the classroom teacher.

SENCoP, then, contains a hidden deceit and a false promise of positivity. Support here is not supportive of liberty and independence nor of dreams and aspirations of an individualised future. It is about ensuring Foucauldian conformity and servitude to the ideology of employment and of making a positive contribution to society. The docile body here is cast in a mould of productivity and conformity and then cast out to work and to make a positive contribution by being employable. The disabled body, in contrast, troubles this casting, and as such, does not make the cut.

*Independence and employment*

Accountable then to a Conservative government, SENCoP is ideologically saturated by the values, assumptions and expectations of the economy that resonate with the productive of docile and productive bodies that abide to the demands of independence, independent living and to employment. By unravelling the discursive veil of ‘independent living’ we wish to show how this politically imagined configuration of the body rejects the humanness of dependence in favour of the mythical existence of the independent body. That is, a political commitment to independence actually provides no more than a safety net for people that are deemed unable to meet a normative set of needs (Shipley & Upton, 1992, cited in Lawrence, 2009). Employability becomes the straightjacket, a normalising technique that appeals to the conditions of neoliberal citizenship (Lakes 2011), as work is ‘promoted ideologically as a fundamentally good thing’ (Bambra, 2011, p. 4) for all children to aspire to.

For example, SENCoP details that ‘being supported toward greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for children and young people with SEN’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 122). Like Elder-Woodward (2013) we do not oppose the philosophy of and right to independence and to employment; however, we critically contest the framing of such within the discourse of the Code. Recurrently, independence and employability is contextualised through a normative framework that accords to the preparation and/or successful transition to adulthood. According to the Code, the preparation to successful life outcomes include;

* Higher education and/or employment- this includes **exploring different employment options**,
* Independent living- this means young people **having choice, control and freedom** over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements,
* Participation in society, including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in and **contributing to, the local community**

(D*f*E, 2014, p. 122; *emphasis added*)

Considering the definition of ‘independent living’ only, SENCoP resonates with an understanding at the heart of the Independent Living Movement. Within this movement, ‘we do not use the term ‘independent’ to mean someone who can do everything for themselves, but to indicate someone who has taken control of their life and is choosing how that life is led’ (Brisenden, 1986, p. 178). Grounded in a history of struggles and activism, the fight for independent living was integral to the disabled people’s movement which demanded an innovative policy response (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). However, as this trajectory of independence entered the political world, a new ideological framework for independent living emerged; bound to the normative expectations of adulthood within the boundaries of ableism. As stated in SENCoP, independence entails the assumption that all disabled people will take full control of ‘their health, where they will live, their relationships, control their finances, how they will participate in the community and achieve greater independence’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 21). Reduced to a normative expectation, this framework assumes that all ‘disabled people want to be self-reliant without help; or that we did not wish to be dependent or to rely on other people; or that we wanted to think and do things for ourselves’ (Davis, 1984, cited in Morris, 2011). Thus, to dismantle the surrounding framework, the political undertone of independent living is misunderstood at best, if not a corrupt expression of neoliberal intentions to mould a population of docile and self-reliant workers.

As a recurrent theme throughout SENCoP, independent living and employability is entrenched by political concerns toward wider financial instability. For the policy, ‘the best possible educational and other outcomes’ is defined by the ability to ‘getting a job’ and ‘living as independently as possible’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 24). Directed by a climate of austerity then, we suggest that educational policy plays a key role in the aim of shifting the welfare burden onto individuals (Yuang, 2014) as ‘supported, semi-supported or independent accommodation’ (D*f*E, 2014, p. 75) is repeatedly uttered throughout the code. Paradoxically, then, independence is redefined within the rigid confinement of fiscal savagery; a utilitarian approach in favour of neoliberalism (Elder-Woodard, 2013). Politically invigorated, this discourse works to express the neoliberal premise of minimal welfare spending (Roulstone & Hwang, 2015) by providing an evidential account that supports the winding back of benefits (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014). Within these narrow parameters, SENCoP endorses independence through employability as the primary goal of adult life (Ashby et al, 2015) while dependency takes the form of a ‘defective fail’ to match the independent ideal (Davidson, 2007 cited in Herzl-Betz, 2015; Hughes, 2007). Rhetorically, a vocabulary of ‘disability’ and ‘dependence’ are inextricably bound together by a history of Western culture (Davidson, 2007) which assumes ‘the need for help from others as a bad thing’ (Mason, 2000:64). This synonymous pairing is taken advantage of by SENCoP in its tactful presentation of the financial benefits associated with independent living; concomitantly degrading the state of dependency. Thus, the policy’s endorsement of independence through employability maintains a view of ‘the disabled person’ as a figure of alterity; proof of the superior existence of the non-disabled, ‘normal’ human being (Holt, 2012; Peuravaara, 2013; Ware, 2001). Here, disciplinary techniques attempt to ‘normalise’ the distribution of bodies within a grueling employment regime. Put by Foucault (1978, p. 139), such techniques focus on the ‘optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls’.

The dichotomous positioning of an independent and dependent body takes centre stage in an ideological plot, a discursive entrapment that presents disability as a drain on society (Yeo & Moore, 2003). As a rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ unfolds through the explicit utterance of ‘the public purse’ (SENCoP, 2014, p. 123) independence is imagined as a normalised entity of being, that must be upheld at all times. SENCoP continues this regimental subjectification predicated upon the assumption that to be independent, you must be economically productive (Morris, 2011). This is particularly evident when we consider the recent Conservative commitment to ‘stopping benefit cheats and ending welfare’ and their promise to ‘reward work’ (Conservative Party, 2015, p. 28). Rhetorically captured by the Conservative slogan ‘we are all in this together’ the docile body becomes contracted to neoliberal citizenship; it embodies the expectation that overcoming economic downturn is a personal responsibility (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014). Disabled bodies, on the contrary, trouble this contracted relation, and resist the mould that is sculpted by the deployment of disciplinary techniques.

The reduction of independence to a fixed and consistent state is rejected by this paper as a presumptuous misunderstanding of the flexibly-unstable and beautifully diverse human body. Like Patsavas (2014) we refuse to accept the assumption that the human body will occupy the same position one moment that it will in the next. Our life journeys, stories and narratives are rarely tidy, instead following twisted, unstable and often unforeseeable paths. As such, the continuous state of independence through employability that SENCoP endorses is in fact, just another deceit. Rather, built upon a neo-liberal discourse of bodily formality, the state of independency becomes an ideal; simply an illusion of the ableist imagination. Thus, the static embodiment of either independence or dependence is a binary construction that cannot be upheld. Instead, we propose the inseparable fluidity from one state to another as the human body interacts, engages and evolves with its surrounding world and the systems of power that this world deploys. That is, we live in a modern world that requires a sense of partnership (Reindal, 1999). By reframing the way in which humans interact in the world, disabled bodies offer the possibility to reframe the independent/dependent - productive/ non-productive dichotomy within the natural state of human interdependence (Herzl-Betz, 2015). To put it in other terms, children and young people labelled with SEND trouble the policy’s attempt to distribute, manage, and organise due to their unruly and leaky bodies.

**Conclusion**

Within this article we examined a policy narrative and revealed the regimental twists and turns of an extant controlling ideology. Despite being named as a movement away from ideology, our analysis revealed SENCoP to be constrained by a Conservative ideological history. This history we believe straightjackets the form and function of the body locating such on a continuum of productive and ‘non-productive’ bodies; between the docile able body and what we name as the active disabled body (Mitchel and Synder, 2015). Through analysis of ‘three little words’ we have attempted to shift the discourse away from the non-recognition of some disabled bodies by questioning what does educational support actually do and who do the agencies of support really support. Within these restrictions, the production of independent employable bodies is exposed as a cynical attempt to control the population. Independence stands here then as a direct contradiction to the etymological value of Independent Living Movement. We suggest that activism and commitment of individuals that fought for the Independent Living Movement has in effect, been trampled on by politically egotistic ideologies surrounding normative, neoliberal notions of independence.

The policy’s overt positioning of productivity within these three words is therefore, an unhelpful framework that creates a dichotomous illusion of disabled bodies as un-productive and ‘in need’ of support against a mythical being that is non-disabled, docile, independent and productive. The ‘landmark’ Children and Families Act and associated SENCoP in its attempt to ‘underpin wider reforms to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background’ (DfE, 2014, p. 1) becomes saturated by a neoliberal desire that reduces adulthood to values of economic productivity and fiscal savagery. To return to Marx (Harvey, 2000), this policy transforms a population into future workers nothing more than a measure of capital. Educational ‘support’ therefore becomes but an entrapment of this ideology and an embodiment of the ‘linguistically, deployed panoptic technologies of power’ that this policy enforces (Liasidou, 2008, p. 408).

In its inherent pursuit to abide to neoliberal intentions of the production of specific adulthoods, this education policy has created an ideological vacuum of complications, contradictions and naiveties. In particular, we have worked within an understanding of embodiment, to highlight the confusion within neoliberal ideologies, whereby the drive to produce a population of so-called ‘independent bodies’ becomes futile. In reality, the regimented discourse of policy recommendations, expectations and assumptions create bodies that are docile, but also ones that are dependent upon political doctrine. Indeed, while it is our contention that the process of embodiment should be self-defined, the disciplined manner of policy prohibits any such process. In this way, the values and aims of policy are ideologically impure (Norwich, 1996) leaving the sense of true embodiment unstable and untenable as *Their* ‘independent’ body is made wholly dependent. In contrast, the disabled body is liberated through its inherent interdependence and active resistance to a coalition regime of support, employment and independence. To this end, we are reminded of Foucault’s conceptualisation of power, that is, as it is a productive relation that would not be possible without resistance (Foucault, 1982, 2007). It is this resistance that we would like to put forward as scope for further discussion. Resistance, put by Beckett et al (2016, p. 6) ‘is a transgenerational creative force… allowing for the enlargement of the possibilities of self-determination and new economies of power’. We conclude therefore that disabled bodies should actively resist the discursive powers, of docility and independence, and offer new ways of bodily interpretations and expressions which ‘communicate, transform, and contest existing social structures’ (Low, 2003, p. 16).

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