

EDUCATIONAL
ORGANISATION: TECHNICAL/MANAGERIAL AND PARTICIPATIVE/PROFESSIONAL
PERSPECTIVES

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I commenced a recent paper on school management with the claim that:

Despite the current level of rhetoric about local school management, times are tough for advocates of democratic participation and collaboration at the school level. This is because forms of school level participation may well serve as conservative managerial devices rather than as genuine democratic reforms. Current versions ... tend to take educational management in educationally, socially and administratively conservative directions. (Angus 1992a. p. 4)

Recent developments have meant that times are even tougher. The social and educational vision of an equitable and socially just society has been dimmed by one of a technological future in which economic imperatives are to be pursued through individual competition and industrial restructuring. Business and industry, media, politicians and political appointees have become influential new players in the educational arena. The voices of educationalists generally, and particularly of teacher unions, parent groups and members of the education bureaucracy have become correspondingly muffled. Educational workers may well feel that their position is weakened because the rhetoric of equity and democracy, which had been used to support progressive initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s, has been progressively devalued and marginalised during the 1980s and 1990s.

Even before the recent election in Victoria, the Australian state in which the rhetoric and practice of participation and collaboration in educational governance has been strongest over the past decade, there had been a significant retreat from democratic to managerial practices (Angus 1989; Bessant 1988). Despite important gains at the level of particular school communities where participation was strongly asserted from below, and within now-marginalised sections of the education bureaucracy, participative democratic practices have not, in the main, been institutionalised within the Victorian administrative system (Angus and Rizvi 1989; Rizvi and Angus 1990). This does not mean, of course, that we should be pessimistic about the ultimate possibilities of more democratic, participative and professional modes of educational governance. We do need to recognise however that there has been a general shift in the educational policy context throughout Australia and elsewhere such that schools are being pushed towards more technical and managerial forms of administration after a period in which there had been some opportunities for participative management.

In this paper, after briefly examining participative and managerial

conceptions of educational organisation and the current education policy context with its climate of corporate managerialism and educational control, I shall illustrate how developments in the literature of educational administration have been compatible with the political and economic press for conservative educational reform and managerialism. Finally, I shall endeavour to illustrate two opposed types of educational organisation by discussing several aspects of organisation which would be conceived of differently in the case of an organisation characterised by a technical/managerial form of organisation or a participative/professional one. For the purpose of the exercise, I shall examine the possible differences between technical/managerial schools and participative/professional schools in terms of their general conception of leadership, their response to policy direction, their conception of organisational roles and their relationship with the school community.

Participative and managerial conceptions of educational organisation

The nature of school-based management of local schools within systems of educational provision has not yet been thoroughly analysed within the education literature. Good analyses of general trends and positions exist (e.g. Chapman 1990) but these, quite rightly, raise more questions than they answer. There are also management texts which purport to show practitioners how to do local school management (e.g. Caldwell and Spinks 1988; Fidler and Bowles 1989) but these generally lack a critical dimension or any sense of the social and political context in which schools must operate. Perhaps most helpful have been attempts to critically analyse instances of, and the political framing of, the nature of participation in practice at the school level (e.g. Angus and Rizvi 1989; Smyth, forthcoming; Watkins et al. 1987).

This last literature group is patchy but is largely characterised by an attempt to explore the possibility that local, participative organisational forms can enhance both progressive opportunities for partnerships between schools and communities and also the development of a collaborative form of teacher professionalism in a climate of industrial democracy, social equality and commitment to the democratisation of education. This view recognises that education serves social and cultural purposes as well as economic ones. It also recognises the possibility that the rhetoric of school-level management can be employed in a seductive, efficiency-oriented and prescribed manner which excludes participants from genuine questioning and critique of educational issues and possibilities. This approach to school-level management is exclusive rather than inclusive, and controls and directs participants rather than inviting all members of the school-level educational partnership to reflect upon and appraise the education afforded by schools in terms of its social, educative and democratic possibilities. Increasingly this literature warns that it is the managerial possibilities of school-based management, with an emphasis on efficiency and control, which are currently in the ascendant (Angus 1992b; Smyth,

forthcoming).

As an example of the shift in the educational debate away from participation to managerialism, the ultimately flawed Victorian attempt to reform educational bureaucracy and promote broad school-level participation in the early 1980s can be contrasted with recent reforms in the neighbouring state of New South Wales, which also claim to promote school-level participation and decision-making. A major NSW report on education (Scott 1989) set out to recommend ways of improving the operations of the state's education bureaucracy. The starting assumption seemed to be that the performance of the Education Department could be improved by a more tightly defined structure of roles and responsibilities, a better coordinated, hierarchical accountability system and a clearer definition of goals. In the ensuing report, *Schools Renewal: A Strategy to Revitalise Schools Within the New South Wales State Education System* (Scott 1989), there is an emphasis on local school management, but the particular recommended version is accommodated comfortably within the principles of corporate management (Angus 1989; Bessant 1988). An important element in all this is a strong rhetoric of the need to reduce unwieldy and self-serving bureaucracy (the so-called 'educational establishment') and release schools from both bureaucratic restrictions and presumed undue control by the education profession. In other words, rather than reforming bureaucracy in ways that would render it more responsive, participative and professional, the emphasis is on, as far as possible, eliminating bureaucracy.

Dramatically symbolic of such a shift was the selling-off of the historic Bridge Street 'headquarters' of the New South Wales Education Department. To many it seemed then that the Department literally had no 'Centre'. The emphasis, then, is upon local management of schools as a means of inducing efficiency and effectiveness into the system. The notion of local participation in school governance as an extension of democracy and equality is displaced by one of local management as a means of ensuring accountability and task-orientation at the school level, and of ensuring

greater efficiencies through local responsibility for spending. The climate of competition in an educational market further presses schools to lift their game and make greater efforts to deliver the educational goods for their customers.

It seems clear that there is an international trend towards a simultaneous shift in the direction of decentralisation for some kinds of decisions, and centralisation for others. In particular, central governments are assuming, or in some cases returning to, a powerful role in setting broad educational goals, mandating curricula, and establishing common methods of accountability so that school-level decisions are made within a broad framework of centrally-determined priorities, and, most importantly, within the constraints of a devolved budget. The imposition of centralised curriculum and evaluation provides a means of gauging the 'performance' of

particular schools. The emphasis on testing, therefore, may have less to do with providing educational feedback, or even determining standards, than with providing a basis on which schools can be compared by education consumers and administrators.

A climate of conservative educational reform

There has been a general dismissal of educational arguments in favour of economic arguments in recent formulation of education policy (Angus 1992b, Lingart 1991). This seems in part to have resulted from a false perception that schooling has failed to serve the needs of the economy. The obvious problem with this perception is that schools are being blamed for contributing to social and economic uncertainty that is, in fact, a product of the failure of capital, social and cultural change, and shifting economic relativities. In the face of such uncertainty, we tend to fall back too easily upon a general faith in managerialism that has been socially constructed in industrial societies through the institutionalisation of practices of bureaucracy and scientific management. These practices, now represented in educational administration in terms of competencies and corporate management, need to be recognised as more than neutral managerial devices but as significant contributors to patterns of social relationships. The institutionalisation of these as standard and proper ways of managing has led to the taken for granted acceptance of the necessity of efficiency and effectiveness, conceived of in a particular managerial fashion. Tightly controlled school-level management is appealing within this rationale. The democratic and participative procedures that had become partially institutionalised in the school-based practice of teachers and administrators over the past decades are being displaced as the press is towards greater managerialism, technical procedures and corporate control.

The various duties imposed on school councils in the new wave of decentralised management arrangements have not resulted in any general devolution of real power (Angus and Rizvi 1989). However, there are instances in Victoria in particular where the system's rhetoric of participation and democracy has been appropriated in particular sites and used to assert local participation in a meaningful sense. The policies of the new Victorian government, however, despite their rhetoric of self management, will, like those of their colleagues elsewhere, make the exercise of power and autonomy at the school level more difficult.

Within the versions of local school management that are on offer in New South Wales, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and now Victoria, and in conservative education policy generally, it would appear that what is actually devolved to schools is responsibility for a range of management tasks and control of a larger proportion of their budgets. As budgets become more and more precarious, local decisions about the best and most appropriate form of educational delivery and policy, or about the nature and purpose of schooling, are likely to become secondary to, and to be seen as subordinate to, budget considerations. In other words, while the

rhetoric celebrates autonomy and control at the school level, the financial limits within which schools must work are obscured (Ball 1990a; Ball and

Bowe 1992). Within a climate of expenditure cuts in education and the public sector generally, local management begins to sound like a euphemism for devolving to schools the blame for cutbacks. School management therefore needs to be entrepreneurial in attracting both pupils and additional funds. The essential idea, consistent with a market view of the world, is that schools must maximise their local control over their budgets in order to gain the best competitive advantage over other schools.

According to the research of Ball (1990a) and his colleagues in the United Kingdom, this has resulted in a situation in which school-level decision making is dominated by financial considerations (Ball and Bowe 1992). Even more alarming in terms of collaboration within educational organisations, Ball (1990a) has warned of a division emerging in schools between managers (concerned now increasingly with marketing, image building and financial planning) and teachers (concerned with matters that are educational). Principals, who must 'prove' themselves as efficient and entrepreneurial managers, may well feel themselves pressed to become more task-oriented and to push a personal agenda in order to make their 'mark' on the school. There is of course a strong danger that this press may have the effect of eroding team building and professional collegiality amongst principal and staff, and of limiting rather than enhancing community participation in democratic, school-level decision making.

Leadership: managerial authority or professional discourse and influence

Many education participants have quickly come to realise that forms of local school governance do not necessarily amount to participative democratic reforms. They can just as well amount to conservative managerial devices (Angus 1989). Within the mainstream literature on educational administration, however, there does not seem to be any distinction made between these contradictory possibilities. Indeed, in this literature notions of participation, organisational democracy and school culture are generally incorporated into a top-down managerial perspective.

For instance, what is considered appropriate school leadership in educational literature has been heavily influenced by managerial notions of organisational culture, especially as found in the United States management literature such as *In Search of Excellence* (Peters and Waterman 1982) and in the school effectiveness literature (e.g. Purkey and Smith 1985). In particular, this literature gives special attention to the so-called 'higher-order' attributes of leadership, namely 'the capacity to articulate and win commitment to a vision for the school and ensure that vision is institutionalised in the structures, processes and procedures which shape everyday activities' (Caldwell and Spinks 1988, p. 21). Once the 'vision' of the principal has been asserted or imposed, the next step is 'to build the enduring school culture which is critically important if excellence in

schooling is to be attained' (Caldwell and Spinks 1988, p. 54). There is an apparent assumption that the appropriate cultural expectations of those associated with a school will be embodied in the particular values and vision of the leader. The elitist implication of this view is that not only are leaders more visionary than anyone else, but also they are more trustworthy as well.

Administrative leaders, in keeping with managerial notions of organisational culture, are expected to manipulate people and situations so that the leader's 'vision' is willingly shared by followers. This vision, however, is constrained in current circumstances by the direct imposition on the school of quite specific system goals and priorities. Active leadership is therefore required in order to incorporate the desires and needs of followers into a corporate agenda that is set by the leader within the system parameters. Such emphasis on the principal as cultural leader features heavily in the approaches to local school management that are advocated in a bumper crop of recent school management texts (e.g. Beare et al. 1989; Caldwell and Spinks 1988, 1992). These draw heavily on the work of writers like Sergiovanni (e.g. 1984) and Starratt (e.g. undated), who in turn incorporate much of the perspectives of such scholars as Weick (1976),

Burns (1978), Vaill (1984), Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Deal and Kennedy (1982). Within current management thinking it is believed that leaders of vision are able to bring about a negotiated order which accords with their own definitions and purposes and ensures that any change is directed into reasonable, predictable channels by their own overriding moral force. Other organisational participants, such as teachers, parents and students, if mentioned at all, are generally viewed as essentially passive recipients of the leader's vision. By asserting and defending particular values, it is argued, leaders need not rely solely on their rational-legal authority but must also so strongly articulate and endorse their own vision that it becomes also the vision of followers and so bonds leader and followers together in a shared covenant which then informs the non-negotiable core beliefs and values of the organisation. This core, according to the argument, amounts to an organisational culture which effective leaders or line managers can manufacture and manipulate.

According to Australia's best-known advocates of self-governing schools (Caldwell and Spinks 1988), the process is argued to work as follows: the leader (principal) articulates a vision for the school which becomes shared by other school members; the vision then 'illuminates' the ordinary activities of school members and invests them with 'dramatic significance'; at this point the leader 'implants the vision in structures and processes of the organisation, so that people experience the vision in the various patterned activities of the organisation'; this leads to the happy situation in which day-to-day decisions are made 'in the light of the vision' which by then has become 'the heart of the culture of the organisation'; one can recognise that the leader's vision has been institutionalised in this way when 'all members of the organisation

celebrate the vision in rituals, ceremonies and art forms' (pp. 174-5).

This general perspective remains largely consistent with the more traditional versions of the technical/managerial approach, which assumes that particular leadership tasks can be ascribed to a hierarchical position and that these will be instrumental in the realisation of largely predetermined organisational goals. The approach is particularly conducive to decentralised systems in which principals, the key line managers at the school level, are expected to accept responsibility for, and be accountable for, local management decisions. Most of the managing of so-called 'self-managing' schools (Caldwell and Spinks 1988) is therefore to be done by the principal who is expected to take seriously the task of leadership. The general approach seems totally consistent with the tradition of managerial reforms since Taylorism (Taylor 1947) which have attempted to secure the consent of subordinates and build it into otherwise unchanged forms of management control (Braverman 1974; Clegg and Higgins 1987; Wood 1985).

This conception of leadership as a moral and cultural enterprise is consistent with the broadly functionalist perspective within which the currently dominant approach to education policy and school self-management is located. Through an undue emphasis on the role of the principal as the hierarchical and managerial leader in schools, this perspective assumes that it is possible to reduce complex educational questions to management issues that can be solved merely by the application by the principal of correct management techniques, skills and knowledge. The main skill required of most participants is for them merely to adopt the leader's vision and to slot into the leader's definition of school culture. This is consistent with the tried and tested managerial approach to educational administration which is still celebrated in such well-known texts as that of Hoy and Miskel (1987) which proudly informs readers that the book is about the 'state of the science' of educational administration (p. ii). Management in education is regarded as an end in itself. That is why critics of managerialism such as Bates (Bates 1987) have long held that educational administration amounts to a giant technology of control.

Managerial theories of school administration and organisation have become largely accepted as orthodoxy. As such they legitimate particular managerial concepts and forms of organisation while constraining the

conceptualisation of alternatives. Because of the hegemony of managerial thinking, even reforms that include a rhetoric of participation, local decision making, and even school culture, are incorporated into managerialism with an emphasis on hierarchical leadership. It should come as no surprise therefore that academics in the field of educational administration should leap onto the bandwagon of school-based management and incorporate such notions into straightforward techniques of management control of schools. The priority given to management as a set of techniques means that it becomes a vehicle not only for the implementation of reforms, but also for linking school-level practices with central policy directions.

In contrast to the above, in a participative/professional approach to organisation, authority would not reside entirely with occupants of administrative positions. From the participative/professional point of view, if leadership is to contribute to educational reform that goes beyond the reproduction of managerialism, it will be necessary to conceive of school leadership as something other than part of a top-down hierarchy. Any participant is capable of exercising leadership and performing acts of leadership on some occasions. From a broad social and political perspective, an act of leadership would be one that was influential or potentially influential, and which contained a degree of penetration or potential penetration of the broader social and political context so that an aspect of education might be seen more clearly within that context. Knowing participants, as human agents, would make connections between their everyday actions and the organisational structure which they attempt to influence.

The connection between leadership and influence is important. In a participative/professional environment, those in formal leadership positions may well use the authority of their position to facilitate the exercise of influence of other participants who, for one reason or another, have begun to examine critically, and engage in dialogue about, educational issues and educational purposes so that they are rendered problematic and subjected to scrutiny. Such administrators would not stand on their positions but would welcome considered input from all quarters in open discourse in which the aim would be to assist all education workers – teachers, parents, administrators and others – to regain power over educational and organisational processes. Leadership would then necessarily be more free-floating and could be appropriated by any participants as they exerted influence in self-determining ways. Through such processes the apparent permanence and stability of technical/managerial structures may be open to challenge and reconstruction by participative/professional organisational actors.

Implementation of policy or interpretation and appropriation of policy

Current educational policy and planning is linked strongly with national social and economic goals and this linkage has profound implications for the ways in which the purposes of education are regarded. It is significant that in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, the voice of public educators has been largely marginalised in the educational policy arena (Angus 1992b) as renewed emphasis has been placed on technical/managerial educational control. This is largely because, in Thatcherite terminology, education is believed to suffer from 'provider capture' – the education profession is not to be trusted. Self-interested educators and education officials are claimed to have been running the system to suit themselves rather than the needs of children or the nation. This is one of a number of assumptions that seem to be shared by the main political groups. Accordingly, educational participants and educational perspectives are largely ignored in the policy arena in which schools and

the education system are seen largely as key strategic sites in which pupils can be trained to contribute, individually and collectively, to the nation's economic and industrial development and competitiveness. Within this general approach, the essential role for education is one of contributing to the efficient development of a nation's human resources, or human capital, as a major part of the effort to achieve the nation's social

and economic priorities.

Despite the policy rhetoric about the local management and even the self-management (Caldwell and Spinks 1988) of schools, therefore, the school-level reality is that a plethora of changes are being directly imposed upon schools from above. Through the recentralisation of major policy and monitoring functions, along with the devolution to schools of 'bulk' or 'global' funding, school managers and school councils are increasingly held responsible for the effective implementation of policy and management of the budget. Close monitoring and accountability measures are designed to ensure that schools use their limited autonomy to do the right thing in terms of imposed policies and mandates. For instance, schools in most states are expected to produce Development Plans and mission statements which are consistent with central and regional Development Plans and mission statements.

The school-based line managers and a managed process of school-level decision making legitimise central policy and the reform process, because these give the appearance of providing local input and therefore rendering current policies to some extent more acceptable. All participants, even virtual non-participants who merely offer passive compliance, are implicated. At the school level, but within the parameters of system plans and priorities, teachers, administrators and school councillors are expected to construct appropriate and specific development plans and detailed action plans which indicate how objectives will be realised. To this extent there is local, but limited, involvement. Such plans, of course, are generally linked to performance indicators so that local personnel can be held accountable for their performance in achieving the planned results. The focus throughout is on outcomes. Mandated policies are to be implemented largely unproblematically. The process allows for very little real discretion at the local level. The emphasis is always on the end-product – the achievement of performance indicators, the realisation of action plans and development plans, and the implementation of policies such that prescribed results are achieved and targets are met.

This approach is consistent with classical managerialism in which policy is determined by experts and the job of administrators and teachers is merely to implement it uncritically. It fails to take account of the results of the huge amount of policy research during the 1970s and 1980s which

attempted to address the so-called 'implementation problem' – the consistent finding that mandated policies were not implemented as policy-makers intended because institutional-level practitioners, the 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipski 1980) exercised their autonomy and discretion in critically appraising and re-interpreting such policy. The exercise of such critical scrutiny would not deny the importance of system policy in identifying and highlighting important areas of attention. However it would also seek to appropriate the policy and adapt it to the needs of the local school and community. This would seem to be the essence of the kind of educational professionalism that requires education workers to be capable of informed analysis of schooling in its social and political context.

From this perspective, part of the work of being a teacher, for instance, would be to contribute to education debates and to work with fellow teachers and the school community towards a position on educational issues. Teachers, students, administrators and school communities would develop the practice of critical scrutiny in the knowledge that decisions about education involve negotiated cultural and political choices and contested questions of value rather than simply questions of efficiency and effectiveness. Such an approach would be consistent with educators seeing their role as one of not merely conveying knowledge for consumption, but as one of 'helping students to become creative, critical thinkers and active social participants, and to become capable of redefining the nature of their own lives in the society in which they live' (Gordon 1985). To be educative in this sense, educational organisations would need to embody principles of professional judgement, reflective practice and critical scrutiny.

The current managerial press is already bringing about conservative changes in the nature of teaching and the role of teachers. In keeping with an approach to education that is consistent with principles of scientific management (Taylor 1947; Callahan 1962), the focus on line management gives apparent autonomy to the manager but in fact reduces the autonomy of both managers and teachers. Most destructively, it makes a clear role distinction between managers and non-managers, between educational administrators and teachers, between managers' market-oriented concerns with budgets, staffing and public relations, and teachers' classroom and pupil-oriented concerns with educational and curriculum issues (Ball 1990a; Angus 1992b). Consistent with the principles of corporate managerialism, the roles of education workers become more fixed and formalised, there is an emphasis on direct supervision, and work and community relationships become more instrumental, impersonal and role-based.

In contrast to such managerialism, members of participative/professional school communities would assert their professional judgements by refusing to be simply objects of policy, people to whom the policy is applied. Instead they could well see themselves in the appropriately educational position of active participants, historical actors in the creation or utilisation of policy in ways that are appropriate in their arenas of practice. They would resist the renewed elevation of managerialism into an

increasingly unchallengeable position (Ball 1990b) and, with it, the current reduction of important social, cultural and educational problems to management concerns that can be rendered soluble by managerialist techniques. They would resist the current reconstruction of educational work along technical/managerial lines and the shift from tentative experiments in participative/professional approaches in the governance of schools to tried and tested technical/managerial forms.

Educational researchers and theorists have long argued that one of the weaknesses of the traditional occupational culture of teaching is that, in various ways, it acts to preserve the status quo. In particular, teachers

are said typically to go about their work in ways which emphasise the individualist and isolated nature of the way teaching has been historically and socially constructed. Teaching is seen as a private activity, separated from the social context, and is assumed to be politically neutral. The appropriate role for a teacher is therefore generally seen as a public servant or teacher technician (Bullough et al. 1985). These aspects of teacher culture are reinforced by current conservative policies. Alternative understandings of the nature of teacher's work, which had become to be asserted to some extent during the past two decades or so, have become correspondingly marginalised. These include the notion that teachers and school communities would take the initiative in critically appraising their teaching practice and the experience of schooling. Such critical questioning did not come easily or readily to teachers, however, because like most of us they are socialised into the prevailing bureaucratic, technical/managerial rationality. This is precisely why experience in participative/professional organisational forms, in schools and society more broadly, is important: participation is itself educative as participants learn to contribute to dialogue over issues that are problematic. Such an educative process would seem to me to be critical in democratic versions of professionalism.

Community as market or as education participants

The way people participate in school organisation is influenced by entrenched structures and their associated patterns of power relationships (Angus and Rizvi 1989). Despite a rhetoric of reform these are likely to be sustained in often subtle ways that involve the culturally and historically constituted dispositions of particular groups. Amongst the strongest of these are institutionalised expectations about the nature of education and educational administration, and the familiar roles of education participants. Because of widely shared historical understandings of these matters, participants in educational governance tend to shape themselves to fit the pattern of established, 'neutrally' defined role positions. There is a fairly common set of expectations, for instance, of people who occupy the roles of pupil, teacher, parent, principal and so on. The current rhetoric of local management of schools does not, in my view, challenge the traditional, technical/managerial construction of these role positions.

Instead, participants in education are expected to fit roles and management processes which are centrally defined. The role of the individual or group is represented as one of participating according to appropriate rules, policies and processes.

The guiding principles which informed notions of decentralisation in the state of Victoria in the early 1980s were ones of participation and collaboration in a spirit of democratisation and community involvement in local schools. Similar themes entered the education debate around Australia. In the 1990s, in Victoria, NSW and elsewhere, the emphasis is upon notions of effective and efficient institutionally-based educational management which is argued to result from the reduction of bureaucratic control and interference at the school level. The reduction of central control is linked with the deregulation of school zones. This has enabled schools to be placed in relation to each other as competitors in an educational market. Within such a relationship, quite clearly, individual schools will have to compete with other schools for pupils (or market share) in such a way that, according to the advocates of this style of institutional management, the more efficiently managed and entrepreneurial schools are likely to be successful.

Part of the recent electoral appeal of the Coalition policies in Victoria was their promise to 'fix' the education 'problem' by putting schools on this type of market footing. Within the demands of the market in which schools must compete, schools themselves become more competitive places. Education may then be regarded as a commodity which gives its recipients a competitive advantage rather than as a social good of fundamental importance in its own right. The interests that are privileged are those that are assumed to be consistent with the competitive interests of the

nation, namely, the wealth producers, accumulators of capital, those who can contribute to a productive culture and high-tech future. It follows that the interests of the socially and culturally marginalised, those not in tune with the new and competitive Australia, or simply those not organised into constituencies vying for a slice of the action, are less likely to be served or to be accommodated in curriculum which is not made relevant for distinctive communities and local cultures. Unless we are very careful the result is likely to be increased polarisation of schools and educational attainment along lines of social class and ethnicity (Ball 1990).

In the managerial, market-oriented perspective, society is envisaged as a collection of possessive individuals who, as human capital, seek from education the best return for their investment of time, effort and money. The dominance of values associated with this approach has meant the marginalisation or incorporation of other values associated especially with equity, justice and community. However, such competing understandings of the fundamental purposes of schooling reflect different educational visions, different notions of the good society and, importantly, different conceptions of the appropriate relationship between schools and their

communities. The interest of the consumer parent or the consumer community will be specifically in the maximisation of immediate satisfaction from what the school is able to offer students in terms of their own economic advancement in a competitive marketplace. Parents may be welcomed as school governors or school councillors if they can contribute valuable financial management skills, but their main role in education is to make the right choice of school.

Those community members who do become participants in education management are likely, for a host of reasons, to come from the ranks of 'concerned citizens' – those articulate, relatively prominent and often privileged members of the community who are likely to be found also on other local bodies and service associations. The rhetoric of local school management implies that limited opportunities for some parents to sit on the governing bodies of schools is equivalent to total community involvement. Community interests are regarded as relatively homogeneous so that what is presented is 'a homogenised view of parents and community which overlooks major social and cultural differences, even antagonisms' (Seddon et al. 1990, p.45) in favour of a neutral concern with 'good management'.

Education is therefore reduced to school management problems that are represented as being amenable to direct solutions within the school. This is consistent with the mainstream literature in educational administration and, more importantly, with developments in the broad educational policy arena within which technical/ managerial notions pervade the rhetoric of accountability, corporate management, school effectiveness, centralised curriculum, national testing and the like. The narrow focus of education management on schools as neutral institutions that are to manage budgets, implement policy and deliver quality outputs, diverts attention from the problematic nature of education in its social context and from the social and cultural issues which education must address. Concern with corporate management and program budgets sits easily with the market rationality which has become the dominant feature in educational debates. Its emphasis on efficiency, which in education management becomes increasingly complex as greater budgetary powers are devolved to self-managing schools, may well increase rather than decrease the distance between communities and schools. Community representatives in the form of school councillors or governors increasingly must spend meeting time working on (or giving approval to) school budgets rather than considering educational issues. The pressure is strong for education systems to be integrated into the mechanisms of the commercial market yet schools have long been regarded as significant social institutions. By treating education as a commercial product and schools as competitors in a marketplace, we are altering the nature of participation in what for many people is the most significant social institution after the family (Bastian et al 1986).

Given the press to corporate managerialism and the reduction of education to the service of the market, the economy and national interests, the priority given to schooling as a public good in the past will need to be re-asserted. From the emerging new right perspective, the citizen as

individual is sovereign, with freedom from interference of others in the

pursuit of individual interests. The community in this perspective is simply the locale in which the market operates, and local management of schools pits schools against each other to win customers. Within an alternative view, one which emphasises social democracy, community members may be seen as active social and political beings (Held 1989) whose individual existence merges into membership of a collectivity which brings with it rights and responsibilities of participation- including participation in local school governance. This would be consistent with participative/professional notions of school organisation.

An educational project which incorporates notions of participation and social democracy, and questions whether the best education for children is to be provided within the individualist, competitive and managerial approach, needs to be asserted (Connell 1991; Quicke 1988; Wexler 1989). Such a project could well embrace forms of local school management which would be developed collectively with the partnership of school and community members. The approach would need to make explicit, and to confront, barriers to participation experienced by particular individuals and groups, and to make connections between local issues and the broader social, political and economic context. The kind of genuine democratic participation in school governance that might result from such a project need not run counter to efficient site management (Rizvi 1986). It may even result in better decisions and greater commitment to those decisions, and would also stimulate greater democratic awareness of and commitment to democratic participation in a broader sense. All of these are significant but, in my view, democratic participative/professional involvement would be most important because it could raise for scrutiny a host of issues related to the purpose and meaning of education that are left dormant under technical/managerial notions of educational organisation.

Conclusion: predetermined results or uncertain consequences

Within the kind of participative/professional school organisation that I have advocated in this paper schools would be less certain and less predictable places than current technical/managerial approaches to educational administration and policy would require. There would be less concern with matters of administrative technique that could be drawn upon to ensure the efficient and effective implementation and policy and realisation of planned results. Such linear and instrumentally rational thinking would be rejected in favour of an acceptance of consequences that were somewhat uncertain, but which would result from participants' generation of their own meanings rather than unproblematic acceptance of imposed meanings. There would be a rejection of the neutrality and bureaucratic rationality that is associated with managerialism and which induces subordinates to surrender their professional responsibility. From this perspective organisations could not be seen as consisting of neutral and carefully delineated role positions but of persons of creativity and insight who reflect on experience and use such reflection as a basis for connections with the wider context of schooling and for negotiation with others in the organisational politics of the school. As a result, while

mandated policy may not be implemented unproblematically or result in linear effects, the critical appropriation and adaptation of policy at the school level by participative/professional communities may well result in sound and considered educational outcomes, which may be arguably better and more appropriate in their particular locales.

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