

1

The colonising discourses of Devolution and restructuring" in  
educational administration : why now and who gains ?

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Decentralisation and devolution ( and their locally specific  
terms such as site-based management, self managing schools, self-

governing schools) have become the fashionable administrative solution to 'reforming' education in Western capitalist societies such as England, Sweden, Canada, the USA, Australian and New Zealand. They have also emerged in a form of cultural post-colonial imperialism in Mexico and Sri Lanka largely with the encouragement of such globalising influences as the OECD and World Bank. [e.g. Caldwell, 1988 #160; Brown, 1990 #156]. Devolution as an administrative strategy is seen to better meet the socio-economic needs of national economies in terms of promising greater efficiency and effectiveness in education and by linking education to work in more instrumental ways, thereby increasing productivity.

These global discourses informing educational reform, in which devolution is a key feature, have significant impact upon the local, about who gets what in education and how. This paper is

about the differing ways the global /local interconnections are played out in within national /local boundaries. I frame my discussion about Swedish and Victorian moves towards greater devolution in education within broader debates about the global discourse informing the restructuring of education in the USA, England and New Zealand and then conclude with comments about what are emerging issues with respect to equity.

#### Global discourses and the post-Fordist school

The logic of the global discourse is that in a post-Fordist society national boundaries are shifting and being re-formed. In the post-modern world, there is a shift in emphasis from production to consumption. Markets are fragmented, multi layered and multi-faceted. The key features of post -Fordist work organisation as described by Bagguley are 'fragmented niche markets, general flexible machinery, multiskilled workers, 'human relations' management, decentralised local or plant level bargaining, geographically new industrial districts, flexible specialist communities'(Bagguley, et al. 1990, p. 155) The global market, now informed by new information technologies, requires a more flexible and skilled worker at the local level. Organisations, public and private, must therefore be flexible and specialised enough to meet individual local demands. Those at the workplace are better able to judge and meet these client needs. Thus rather than highly centralised, rule governed, top heavy hierarchical organisational structures with task and specialist oriented job descriptions, decisionmaking with respect to the type and range of products should occur at the interface between client and a multiskilled worker. Organisations should therefore be flatter, made up of relatively autonomous work units able to meet the demands of the market. Quality control is gained

by workers self regulating themselves and their co-workers at the local level e.g. performance appraisal and quality circles. whilst management assumes a co-ordinating rather than controlling overview through policy

It is assumed that schools will also take on the characteristics of post-Fordist organisations which can meet specialist market needs more directly ie. flexible specialisation. The argument put by governments who seek to devolve school governance to the local community tends to be based upon the premise that schools are currently not producing students capable of meeting the needs of the Post-Fordist workplace and , that if schools emulate new organisational forms of the post-Fordist workplace they will, because of their flexibility and capacity for specialisation, be better able to do so.

Another argument has been that devolution is merely the logical evolution of a trend towards decentralisation which originated in the late 1960s [ Caldwell quoted in Walford, 1993 ]. Certainly the notion of having those who work most closely with the 'clients ' of any service in a local community make the decisions because they can best judge need has been a well developed one in both administrative and organisational theory ( as well as industrial and democratic theory)(Blackmore 1986). But it has not until the late 1980s that devolution has been taken to its 'logical' conclusion in the form of the self-managing school in Australia

Whilst the notion of a post-modern society is an appealing futuristic conceptualisation about the reorganisation work, it is, some suggest, largely constructed as much upon belief than empirical research. Labour market research indicates a process of polarisation is occurring between a reduced elite core of full time professional/ managerial/ technical work dominated largely

by white middle class males and the rapidly increasing numbers of casual, part time and increasingly feminised and culturally diverse workers on the periphery ( Age 6 October, 1993). Whether the workplace indeed requires a higher level of skilling for all is questionable. For most, flexibility will mean the capacity to shift across numerous, largely semi- or unskilled jobs rather than the notion of the multi- and technically skilled worker. Second, in the context of the legitimisation and accumulation crisis of the state, the trend in public sector for reform has taken on more Fordist than post-Fordist characteristics with central control maintained through budgetary means, accountability measures such as staff appraisal and performance indicators which are outcome oriented.

What is becoming more apparent as research is being undergone after such decentralist policies have been instigated is that there are particular models which take on different mixes of centralising and decentralising tendencies. For example in Canada, the Edmonton models indicates a mix between central and school based control which favours the centre. That is a form of selective devolution in which schools are merely able to be control what they can be held responsible for and that the centre and other external constraints indeed reduce rather than increase flexibility of schools (Brown 1990). In a study by Brown the decisionmaking model underlying this model did not necessarily mean more participatory decisionmaking or imparting parents with much control. Accountability measures through budgetary procedures and surveys of community, teacher and student satisfaction..a model currently being considered in the Victorian school charter, indeed intensified central control over the local.

In the case of education, clear policy guidelines, institutional profiles in the case of universities and school charters as in New Zealand and now Victoria, as well as curriculum and assessment demands maintain surveillance and control over teachers and students. Peter Watkins talks about how this is a form of 'centralised decentralisation' which does not necessarily reduce central control. Indeed, it reasserts it more effectively than highly bureaucratized and rule regulated organisations. Watkins does not see the tension between centralism and decentralisation so evident in current educational restructuring as being contradictory, but rather as essential to these new forms of control to facilitate capital accumulation (Watkins 1993).

This restructuring of the public sector and more specifically the shift to self managing schools has produced not just a fundamental restructuring in economic but also social relationships. Educational restructuring should be seen as an integral part of the new global economic settlement of the 1980s, in which the nation-state's role is critical (Soucek 1992) and new definitions of citizenship are emerging ( see Feminist Review 39 1991 for a special issue on women , citizenship and the European community). Whilst the problem has been diagnosed at the national level as economic ( lack of international competitiveness, national debt etc), the repercussions of educational restructuring are political and social. Devolution is not a neutral administrative mechanism, but a political and economic strategy which is producing fundamental restructuring of social relationships, between individuals and between the individual and the state. Its political value lies first, in that that states, under various pressures nationally and from

international markets and credit agencies ( and here the links between the OECD, World Bank and IMF need to be analysed further)

can demand and receive more for less in a devolved system of governance. It's grassroots appeal lies in its capacity to draw upon liberal democratic' discourses of individual choice, freedom and community, important concepts to those in social democracies t experiencing the fragmenting forces of post-modern society at the personal, local and national level.

The nature of the state is also changing. The state is being positioned increasingly as the agency through which the global - local connection is articulated within boundaries of specific nation-states. In particular, there has been a significant shift away from the view of the welfare state providing free public education systems for all as a public good towards the notion of education as a private and economic good which must be purchased by the individual. Educational restructuring is closely connected therefore with the formation of educational markets. On the one hand the state is reducing its role in educational provision, leaving it to market forces, and at the same time the state is being highly interventionist in defining how these relationships are being restructured. Indeed, the state 'produces the frameworks within which the privatisation and commercialisation of education will happen, and in so doing ' promotes certain values to guide the processes and undertakes the ideological work necessary to ensure they are publically accepted.' (Kenway, et al. 1993) Furthermore, there are, as Kenway et al point out, different markets ( macro, international) and micro ( local, institutional) which produce 'hybrids' markets with different mixes of state/ private involvement.

At the same time, the global discourse is drawn upon within different historical traditions in various nation-states, cultural systems to articulate in 'national' contexts specific ways the state articulates these new social / economic / political relationships. In the context of the European Community, for example, 'national' or 'citizenship' is taking on new meanings( See Feminist Review 1991) . Guy Neave talks about how the shift in the dialogue of discourse in Western Europe towards marketising education since 1981 still has significantly different practice outcomes in specific national contexts(Neave 1988). In Australia, educational restructuring has been framed by particular forms of economic rationalism and corporate managerialism(Pusey 1992, Yeatman 1990), and as such should be seen to be part of the reshaping of 'mainstream' public policy ( although again with significant differences) (Gordon and Codd 1991).

As in England, the capacity of new right elements in a form of conservative elements to colonise democratic discourses arising from previously radical impulses and social movements is a major feature of this global discourse. In devolving responsibility for the 'hard' decisions increasingly upon the individual and on the 'local community', although initially drawing upon more democratic discourses (e.g. industrial democracy) various Australian Labor governments have provided fertile soil for New Right claims that the state should be less interventionist in both the economy and its traditional areas of responsibility (education, health, welfare) and that efficiency and effectiveness, even equity, can be best achieved through the free range of market forces operating within the facilitating framework of a 'small strong state'. Whilst the New Right discourse in Australia has not been linked in the same way to the moral majority new right and reassertion of back to the family discourses evident in the USA or in the UK, it has tapped into historical concerns about the positioning of public education as 'lesser' with respect to a strong independent private sector, particularly in Victoria in a time of increased competition in

the tertiary sector.

Richard Johnson points out how the New Right was particularly effective in England because it was able to draw upon critiques of the state professions by new participatory and community politics of the 1970s and 1980 by intellectuals who attacked the state institutions as a source of the problem of inequality and the 'modernisers' (Johnson 1989). And by calling upon parental involvement through School Governors, the same tactic was used to draw from a history of school authorities which acted as a balance against state control. But, as Johnson points out, these were also a 'restricted public, based on exclusive forms of knowledge, social interests and expertise [Johnson, 1989 #172;p.99] Yeatman also argues that

Furthermore, these new state formations with respect to education inform and are informed by new conceptualisations of citizenship which in turn have implications for equity. The language of this restructuring is not a language of democratic citizenship. Quite the opposite, it is the language of the market, of individual choice rather than community or social responsibility. Whereas the language of communitarian citizenship recognises social relationships, the language of the market is based upon relationships of contract and exchange. It is a shift in focus from what Herb Gintis calls person rights to property rights. Property rights, as established liberal political theory of the 18th century, vests in individuals the power to enter into social relationships on the basis of their economic rights, notions of

free contract and voluntary exchange. Person rights are invested in an individual merely on the grounds of their membership of a social collectivity. These require equal treatment of citizens, freedom of expression and movement, equal access to participation in decisionmaking and reciprocity in terms of power and authority (Quoted in Apple, 1991). This has particular impact upon educational issues which deal with values, equity and social relationships.

The market freedom and economic modes of relationships which sees all relationships as being a matter of exchange is not particularly a better alternative when one considers the outcomes, whether for women, students or disadvantaged groups generally. It sets up competitive relationships between individual students, individual schools and teachers. It supplants social relationships with exchange relationships, fragmenting and marketing collegiality. This is best exemplified by a comment by a principal in the UK who talks about how her expertise has new value (in monetary terms). As a good manager, she argued, one can no longer be involved in discussions sharing knowledge with other principals, teachers and schools. These collegial discussions are now to be seen as consultancies, as provide expertise and imparting skills, and therefore to be costed and billed (Morris 1993). Professional collegiality is to be supplanted with consultancy and even further exacerbating territoriality in knowledge formation.

The emphasis on market and contractual relationships rather than social relationships is also evident in the different ways community is conceptualised, and who are legitimate voices in education. Community is perceived in an educational market as an aggregate of freely acting individuals making informed choices in order to maximise their self interest. In the School Charters and Schools of the Future documents in Victoria, for example, there are at least five ways in which school community is conceptualised: as a zone or geographical entity, as a market in terms of the community being an aggregate of clients drawn by its

program; as a decisionmaking community in determining needs and policies; as a financial community in which particular resources are consumed and produced; and as an educational or learning community. Whilst these are overlapping, the privileged reading is that of the market- of attracting and fostering clients (Education 1993, Ministry of Education and Training 1993).

In turn, supplanting social relationships with market relationships also changes the political relationships between

the state and the individual and other social groups( parent and teacher unions) as well as within particular work situations e.,g, between managers and workers. In England, the education system was relatively decentralised under the LEA's in a close partnership with teacher unions and parents. The shift to self governing schools was not only informed by economy but also a political and ideological strategy to bypass and bring about the destruction of the largely Labor controlled LEA's, to break the tripartite partnership between the teacher unions, parents and LEA's and to break up the comprehensive system of schooling which had emerged since the 1960s.

At the same time, this significantly changes work relationships within schools, with the increased power of the Head Teacher. The head teachers are now the broker in the mediation work of state educational policy. Halpin et al argue that in England, the notion of a grant maintained schools does not eliminate producer capture, but merely focuses it into the position of the principal in order to increase control. Furthermore, in order to increase central control, the state is prepared to in fact increase funding to grant maintained schools as incentives to opt out, although the underlying rationale is to maintain if not reduce expenditure (Halpin, et al. 1993). This is largely because so few schools have chosen to 'opt out'( 10%). The latest Education Act of 1993 is therefore requiring all schools to consider annually whether they wish to opt out. Finally, the autonomy of these self governing institutions is strictly 'regulated' by the state, particularly due to the overload on headteachers as they carry out the work of the state.

Halpin's English study indicate how schools decided to opt out, not because of the positive features which would arise, but rather because they feared closure, amalgamation or not gaining any additional funds ie consent through fear. Other more secure schools opted out because they felt that the LEA was not funding them adequately. Therefore, opting out appeals to self interest and a narrow view about the responsibilities of school towards a public education system. Indeed, it was heads rather than parents who were the catalyst for initiating moves to opt out...it was not a groundswell of community support but required significant lobbying and persuasion. It was indeed 'producer capture' by the principal's. Head teachers, previously who taught, now only manage, thereby further breaking their links with their staff and the teaching and learning process(Halpin, et al. 1993). So the push towards management in education is perceived as creating new hierarchies within previous collegially based profession of teaching (Halpin, et al. 1993) At the same time, headteachers are feeling more controlled in that they now manage the prescribed national curriculum whereas in the past they negotiated with teachers and LEAs on curriculum matters. Regulated autonomy comes

through indirect guidance through curriculum and assessment practices and not direct administrative rule and regulation(Dale 1989).

New Zealand also provides a fascinating example of how the notion of community and the role of parents has been reworked

through School Charters. Teacher unions involvement was defined as 'producer capture' and parent involvement was reconceptualised in ways which placed them in contradictory positions as both client and employer. Indeed, parents are now actively opposing any further devolution of budgetary matters to School Boards as they do not see the state as guaranteeing them resources(Codd and Gordon 1991, Gordon 1992).

In Victoria, there has been a long history of community involvement in education through the parent organisations in partnership with the teacher unions since 1949, although with various points of tension and dispute (Blackmore 1993). The difference between the move towards community based decisionmaking in the early 1970s which was part of the backlash against an unwieldy bureaucracy in Victoria, is that the earlier movements had a grass roots emphasis, with particular demands about participation and social justice (Blackmore 1986). The more recent 'community' participation movement has its roots in free market ideology and has strong support from business and financial capital, with an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. [Anderson, 1993 #151].

The shift to delegitimise the unions as as key players in educational decisionmaking has led the Victorian conservative government to take a similar position as in New Zealand about producer capture, stating that the unions 'have run education' for the past ten years. The effect as elsewhere is towards increasing the power of principals and parents as legitimate interests whilst decreasing the power of teachers and teacher unions as self-interested claims( see Age reports and editorials Jan 16-22.1993). Parent resistance ( with union support) in Victoria has taken on a grassroots and a highly participatory democratic view of community politics. Indeed, parents, coming from a history of active participation in schools, have occupied two schools since their closure in 1992 for over 300 days and a taken the Victorian government to the EO Commission at a third school. This was not the view of community envisaged by the conservatives, where School Boards, now with less teacher input, were to act as representative bodies in more elite notions of governance.

The extent to which shifts towards devolution have led to

oppositional rather than consensual forms of politics again has differed. In the United States, the shift to devolution has shifted the locus of decisionmaking from superintendents to principals, which in turn has been seen to empower teachers. Furthermore, its emphasis on an educational market and individual choice taps into the American mindset which, as Boyd suggests, has more faith in the market and capitalism than in government (Boyd 1992). In England, the political intent to break the teacher unions and their affiliation with the Labor oriented LEA's was seen as symbolic of a larger shift away from the welfare state and the production of a two-class society symbolised by the comprehensive school. In both New Zealand and Australia, moves towards decentralisation in education and other public sector areas had been initiated by Labor governments under pressure to reduce expenditures by their weak international marketing and financial position. In Australia particularly, it has also been about a federal Labour government intent upon tightening the link between education and the economy through award restructuring and national curriculum guidelines. This facilitated the move of conservative governments towards the logical 'market' form of education. In both instances, the effect has been a significant shift to oppositional politics in Victoria and in New Zealand, with the introduction of school Charters (although Victoria has learnt from the New Zealand experience in

this respect).

The emphasis of managerialist approach to devolution in the 1980s was upon making schools more efficient and effective in terms of meeting national economic needs through meeting the needs of the individual's self interest and so making nation states more competitive globally. This shift in values to gain such widespread support both at all levels and across political persuasions is made possible by the commonsense acceptance of the economic crises of the state as constructed through the media and state policies which define economic considerations of efficiency and effectiveness as 'the given'. Yeatman also suggests that the success of the free market model of distribution of public goods such as education is in part a democratic reaction to paternalistic, top down and bureaucratic modes of state intervention. In Australia this also leads to a reaction against notions of equity given that equity policies (DSP, PEP and EO) were framed by this paternalistic mode of state intervention. She suggests that now the onus is on the individual to self govern and be made responsible for their relationships. Unfortunately, it has been the model of consumer and the market which has emerged as the dominant way of self regulated relationships. This is largely, she suggests, because of the lack of an alternative perspective which provides a more communitarian

and less individualistic mode of self-governance.

Equity has, at least at the Australian Federal Labor level, stayed in the rhetoric and legislation although not necessarily in the practice. In New Zealand, the jettisoning of the equity issue was rapid. It is argued that devolution as an administrative practice enables the marketisation of education in ways which advantage particular social groups. Within a devolved system, competition between self managing schools, and between individuals in improving their educational advantage is encouraged. This benefits certain, usually middle class schools and disadvantages those, usually working class with a high concentration of ethnic or Koori students, schools without the human and material resources to market their school well. Devolution, as user pays generally, advantages those schools and individuals already with cultural (and monetary) capital in a period of declining resources. This is increasingly evident in the UK and New Zealand system. A New Zealand principal indicates how previously she had access to state supported welfare services but now these had to come out of a shrinking school budget. It is also becoming evident in the NSW system in which certain schools have been targetted as specialist and the rest do not gain comparable sponsorship either by the state or private sector. (Age, October) Equity is a major concern for schools previously receiving DSP funds in Victoria, and how it is to be delivered within the framework of Schools of the Future. Whereas previously there had been collaborative relationships between schools (PEEL) on issue of shared concerns in equity (e.g. youth unemployment), these collegial and community oriented relationships are already being undercut by new competitive relationships being established between schools. Indeed, some schools in the Schools of the Future program have received significant funding.

Devolution therefore raises significant questions therefore about who has a legitimate interest in decisionmaking in education, the lack of debate about what constitutes 'local community', and whose interests are being best served by the marketing of education. Research already underway in other devolved systems suggests the following issues regarding just how autonomous and flexible schools are, the changing social relationships and redefinition of notions of community; changing professional

relationships between colleagues and between principals and teachers; the changing role of the state. All impact upon equity. These are the themes I wish to further explore with respect to Sweden.

## Devolution in Sweden.

In Australia, Sweden, was a particular model of corporatist federalism appealing to the Hawke Labor government and encapsulated in Australia Reconstructed . Sweden offered a particular framework for negotiations for a settlement between union, employer and government interests in . It was also unique in first, its high profile regarding equity for women. Indeed, Sweden was cited in 1993 as being the most equal of all societies in OECD with women earning 89% of the male wage on average. Second, Sweden also enjoyed until the late 1980s, comparative prosperity and, as the other Nordic states, a highly developed welfare state. It has a massively and powerfully centralised and organised labour movement at the same time that there is a high level concentration of financial and industrial capital in the hands of a few nationals and increasingly multinationals. Historically, the post-war settlement between labour and capital since 1938 together with the long running government of the Social Democrats( over 40 years) has been maintained and indeed negotiaton or corporatism have been the underlying mindset dominating Swedish politics. Labour and capital have been able to negotiate within the framework of a non-protectionists and non-colonialised industrial sector requiring profit maximising to maintain export -markets. Until 1990, this has meant cheap healthcare and childcare,a free mass education system and minimum unemployment have been maintained.

Persson - Takimura argues that the public sector programs aiming to transfer payment were characterised by universalism or converging all citizens and not just the vulnerable, safeguarded by strong trade unions covering most employees and also a conflict avoiding process of negotiation.(Persson-Tanimura 1988, p. 6) For women, this meant introducing separate taxation for spouses and providing financial incentives for women to do more market work, providing child care and subsidised day services. ( in 1986, 31 % of 0-2 years old and 57% of 3-6 year olds in public childcare); and parental insurance for leave for child care. Women's incorporation into the unions with the wage solidarity principal and the active labour market policies which eased their re-entry into work made the shift from reproductive to productive labour relatively easy.

Since 1990, this tradition in social policy in Sweden is being undermined with the state withdrawing from its previously dominant activities in areas of health, education and welfare in what is seen by many as the dismantling of the welfare state and decomposition of social policy(Marklund 1992). The political, social and economic conditions framing this shift in policy away from a centralist and public sector driven one towards a decentralised and more mixed private/public system are various,

ranging from a collapse of the financial markets ( e.g. banks), a large public debt, the advantages of moving more towards the mixed private / public system more common to other European Community Members, the problems of state funding the welfare system with claims that the state will go bankrupt, the threat of de-industrialisation arising from their entrance into the EEC, etc...The discourse is one of economic and social crisis with unemployment reaching unprecedented levels in 1993.

As Maurice Kogan stated, Sweden has shifted in a short period

from one of the most centralised democracies to one of the most decentralised. The regional layers of control has been 'stripped out' and the instruments at the centre have been greatly reduced in number and power(Kogan 1992). At the same time, Swedes remained determined that equality of education be a primary objective. The extent to which this will occur is yet to be seen.

Despite seeming similarities between Australia and Sweden in terms of the close relationship between Labor governments and unions, there are significant cultural differences in the mindset which informs these policies. Whilst equality has been part of the rhetoric, as in Australia, there has been a strong work ethic implicit in social policies in a 'industrial achievement model' established in the 1950s a period of economic growth in Sweden as elsewhere. In this view of welfare, the state 'punishes' the lower income earner or non-workers in that it compensates unemployed individuals according to a percentage of their lost income, thus favouring the professionals and well off, relatively newly unemployed. Welfare has been grounded in the belief that the individual can best look after themselves and in fact develop 'innovative' income raising activities and work related activities, go into retraining or further education rather than become dependent (Marklund 1992). Hence professionals who are unemployed have received significant assistance through unemployment programs to establish innovative schemes.

At the same time, strong labour market policies have been linked to industrial and wages policies premised upon the wages solidarity policy of 1938 which argued that wages demanded from the unions should be equalised across the entire labour market. Thus the successful export industries and not the declining sectors should be the wage setting norm. This is significant , given that the growth of public sector employment has largely been by women in part time work since the 1950s, with up to 83% participation of women 20-65 in 1990. Women therefore, usually in the less powerful unionised industries have therefore benefitted from this post-war agreement.(Marklund 1992, p.3)

## Devolving Education in Sweden

The Swedish education system is also unique for a number of reasons. First, it has been premised since 1962 upon the notion of a compulsory nine year comprehensive education which commences at 7 years of age in three stages - junior, intermediate and senior. Second, it has been a highly centralised state run system with only about 1% students in 'private' educational institutions. Third, educational policy has long been concerned with disadvantaged groups (working class, women, adults, ethnic-minorities, physically handicapped). Indeed, the centralised state system was premised upon the view that equality was best met by providing the same resources to all students, irrespective of gender, class, geographical location. Likewise, the compulsory comprehensive nine years of education from age 7 was developed around broad areas of knowledge, both technical and academic, and with a central theme of citizenship and active involvement in political decisionmaking and in the workplace (Boli 1989, Englund 1989, Jonsson 1992).

During the 1970s, this dominance of the state came to be challenged. There were significant reports and pilot studies, and by 1980 there was a first step towards decentralised government away from a highly centralised administration. The debate about decentralisation focused around notions of 'effectivity, flexibility, changing capacity. In education, and more specifically in higher education, the stated claims that it

would promote democratisation and contribute to regional development. (Askling 1988, 10) But as has been pointed out, the decentralisation, vocationalisation of the universities and rationalisation has not significantly altered student outcomes in terms of the social characteristics of the student body. The number of working class students has increased, but remains the same proportion of the total. That is, the middle class absorbed the expansion in numbers. Women now constitute 60% of all first years university students, but they are concentrated in the traditional 'female subjects'. (only 21% technical subjects female) compared to nursing and traditional areas where they average 85%.

Citizenship has been a central focus of this general comprehensive and common education. Despite these concerns, the participation of working class students has not altered proportionately with the expansion of higher education and there continues to be high level of gender differentiation at upper secondary level (Jonsson and Arnman 1989). And, as Jonsson argues, what is meant by 'citizen' varies in specific historical

context, about the dominant meanings of democracy at that time. For example, elementary education was introduced in 1842 aimed at social control and peace. The system was both class and gender based- creating a differentiated school system which lasted until the 1940 and which was abolished in 1962 with the introduction of the comprehensive system. The period from the 1880s to the 1940s was largely one of conflict which led to the institutionalisation of the division between two educational paths - working class kids went to either vocational training and manual work; and upper class students went on to upper secondary school, often university and largely 'intellectual work'. The emphasis in the vocational schools was upon inculcating the work ethos and education for citizenship ( Englund 1986)- it was nationalistic and patriarchal . Girls, tended to go to private schools in post-compulsory years as theoretical upper-secondary education was closed to women until 1920s. . Equality meant conferral of basic rights, and citizenship limited to passive form of voting for elections.

Sweden had a low retention rate in post-secondary education well into the 1970s and in comparison to other Scandinavian and OECD countries into the 1980s. Indeed, the new policy-makers of the 1940s and 1950s and in power in the 1980s were largely fostered and educated within the popular movements and popular education. These constituted by the 1950s a

'complex system of interdependent collective organisations run democratically by their members. These included the trade unions and political parties, but also free churches, the temperance movement and the women's movement. There were also very strong consumer cooperatives and producer's co-operatives and athletic federations. It was within these popular movements that people were trained to tackle over political power from those trained in the formal education system : the clergy, aristocracy and civil servants. The folk high schools had begun a strong counter-hegemonic tendency in the nineteenth century by fostering political competence among the more prosperous farmers, but the popular movements created a mass alternative to the formal schools system, especially through the adult education associations and folk high schools. (Ball and Larsson 1989, p. 6)

In the post-war years, as in Australia, the emphasis was on education for citizenship. Initially this was phrased as a more participatory view of democracy. But it was during this period that the faith in 'objective' social science to inform educational reform was consolidated. 'Social science was supposed

to act as a value-free instrument in social engineering and to solve the problems of the society of the future'. So rather than

a democratisation of the process, in which there was greater participation, the period was one in which the elite of experts and notion of rational planning dominated, a time of depoliticisation. Social reform followed upon careful research, public and representative commissions, piloting of alternatives and then implementation. The model of research was positivistic, rationalist and linear. The state was seen to be the best instrument for rational planning.

I

Indeed, the state through a policy of social engineering, was important in initiating and implementing Equal Opportunity reforms in education and the workplace. This was done through coercion/consent approaches. For example, in 1985 it was determined that there were insufficient women headteachers. Consequently, it was legislated that a certain percentage of women should be head teachers by 1994 and that this would be mandated if this figure had not been met. As in Australia, equity relied upon a 'strong' paternalistic state and 'strong' policy interventions in what Anna Yeatman calls protectionist feminism..

What has historically marked all forms of social policy in Sweden, including educational policy, is the desire for consensus. As Ball and Larsson note, most significant education reform decisions have been backed by the major political parties, the unions and the employers. The emphasis has been on the group rather than the individual, on group decisions over individual beliefs (Ball and Larsson 1989, p. 7) The search for consensus is particularly obvious in the educational settlements.

Since their election in 1989, recent reforms by conservative coalition indicate a more fundamental shift in the politics of educational reform. Although the rhetoric associated with devolution and creating free schools has been associated with discourses about parental choice, it has been implemented, as is the norm with Swedes, through strong government intervention. There was little evidence of strong community demand for particular educational reforms e.g. lobbying of parent organisations, although the language of reform was couched in terms of responding to parent demands. Indeed, the survey upon which parental demand is based was instigated by the National Agency of Education at government request.

What is different about the recent step towards devolution?

First, the most educational reform has been instigated by a non-representative committee, largely composed of business representatives, and implemented with little consultation with unions or researchers. Indeed, the approach to social policy making through consensus amongst stakeholders has been fragmented and new conflictual relationships are being built up between teacher unions and the state.

Second, there has been a shift towards devolution in education as elsewhere. The municipalities (kommuns) are now empowered to run schools, appoint rektors and teachers, and delegate financial and other powers substantially to schools, and if they choose to sub-kommuns. The kommuns receive block grants and in turn distribute these between schools under their jurisdiction according to perceived needs (determined by a base grant of 85% to each school per capita and then additional monies according to special needs). The School Board, appointed by the kommun, has legal powers and responsibilities which provide the frame for each school- this includes surveillance of the juridical aspects of national policy and correct administration of finance as delegated to schools. They appoint school leaders and in their

training. The School Board also connects schools to other services. Schools are to receive block grants. The relationship between the school and kommun therefore is about negotiation between adjacent and complementary values, argues Kogan. The schools as the source of professional knowledge, but the kommun has the frame for professional working through its prescriptive and allocative powers. It is also a democratic and elected body as is the Board. It represents all political interests and parties. On the one hand, the kommun and School Board can act as a source of critique on the part of the school's clients. On the other, teacher unions express concern that a non-educational body has such jurisdiction and that education has to compete with other community services.

Staffing and recruitment has also been devolved to local education authorities in 1990, a move which was opposed by teacher unions and lost on a vote in parliament by 6 votes. Now the notion of individual contracts for teachers is being proposed and strongly opposed strongly by unions, who are considering strike action. In general, the unions see decentralisation to local municipalities or communes (responsible for a large number of schools) as part of an historical trend initiated by the Social Democrats twenty years ago but which has now been framed within a fundamental shift in philosophy.

Third, there has been an initial move to allow free schools. The Education Act previously disallowed the establishment of independent schools (of which there were only 2% special cases). Free schools are seen by many as being the first step towards privatisation and creating two classes of education. The concept originated amongst largely professionals interested in school development in the conservative party. To quote the Vice President of one of the teachers union Lararnas Roksforbund

Free or private schools, every pupil in a community, such as Stockholm, gets a certain amount of money ( grants)..but a free school receives 85% and communities think this is too much as it is much harder for communities to keep a school and think it is wrong that free schools get 85 % and can also charge fees which community schools cannot charge. It is all so new in Sweden we don;t know. Many see it as creating first and second class school. And especially in certain areas of Stockholm , there are many people who can't choose'

Fourth, the nature of teachers' work is being altered. The local communes ( kommuns) are now being asked by the government to reduce expenditure. Education, therefore, is being treated as the same as any other local service without to 18% cuts. Consequently many teachers are being sacked and the centralised employment conditions of teachers with wages being set by the state is being challenged with the notion of individual contracts.

The communities want to save as much as possible and want to control teachers as other employees..is not the money, the risk for teachers is the increase in hours because communities don't understand educational issues and don't see difference between teaching 20 and 28 hours. At the same time the state is bragging about the quality of Swedish schools in Europe.

Fifth, the role of the leader teacher or Rektor has significantly alter.As elsewhere, the Rektor is the mediator in the new social, political and economic relationships now being formed. Whereas in the past many leader teachers were inducted from teaching, and had often had the position as curriculum co-ordinator in schools, and therefore a strong educational bent, the rektor had not has significant impact upon what occurred in classrooms,.

Professional autonomy was maintained, and the teacher leader facilitated this through financial management. Now the rektor has taken on both financial and management tasks as well as educational. Furthermore, schools have been created through amalgamation of all educational services from kindergarten pre-school, child care through to Year 12.

Sixth, curriculum reform is leading to greater 'choice' being offered within the compulsory years. The 1991 legislation altered upper secondary schooling, originally run along theoretical and vocational lines and largely perpetuating the historically divided system premised upon gender and class into 16 nationally defined programmes. One aim is to achieve greater balance between sexes in each....and all attempt to blend the vocational and theoretical and establish programmes of same length ( 3 years). At the same time, in Sweden, curriculum has

always been guided by national documents ( Laroplan) and hence its existence of not perceive a radical change in political control or a tremor of dissent.

The implications for equity are complex. It is argued that the notion of individual choice has now entered the discourse and through this, the establishment of free schools ( which are indeed funded up to 85% by grant). The fear therefore, is that this is the first step towards a private system competing with the public, and that this will lead to a divisive and unequal society.

Furthermore, with the deregulation of the labour market which has led to changing work conditions for teachers, moving towards a market philosophy. In tertiary education, the gender gap has increased in wages after two years of individual contracts. It is fear without centralised wage setting, together with devolved community based decisions about staffing and resources, that teachers' work conditions will be further eroded.

Third, head teachers are also moving into more managerialist modes and are not, as was the history of the 'leader teacher', actually involved with teaching, have now become administrators. Whilst these changes are currently under way, Kogan argues in his discussion about the role of the new leader teachers. As yet, there is little uniformity in how the various forms of educational governance will occur at the community level. For example, some kommuns have no School Board. On one the rektor is called the 'production chief'. In others, para-market systems in which schools are seen merely as purchaser-providers, are developing.

Fourth, there are competing reform initiatives with contradictory impulses. As yet, the outcome is to be see. Ironically, E0 legislation to increase the number of female headteachers has coincided with a number of other educational reforms - the amalgamation of schools into larger multicampus units from K to 12,devolution to local communes and the demands for decreased public expenditures as block grants to communities are decreased. Many of the new Assistant Principals who make up the large percentage of increase are drawn from the pre-school sector and are therefore 'cheaper'. We have more women HTs to up to 30% increase in the last three years: We think this was due to the E0 program implemented in 1985. This stated we must have 30% in 1992 and in 1995 40% etc....this was going to be legislated for if it did not occur for in voluntary fashion. It was a target which , if not met, they would make it mandatory.

Finally, with respect to equity, particularly for women.

Sweden is often cited as being the most equal country- statistics

such as 83% of women 20-64 in 1993 being in the workforce, that women receive 89% of male wage on average (compared to 75% in Australia) Women's economic independence is therefore a unique factor in Swedish society, a much cited statistic, and certainly in many ways frees them from their dependence upon individual men. What is less often recognised is that women's dependence upon the labour market and political and trade union decision making processes rather than on individual men has increased. (Persson-Tanimura 1988, p.3) Women's interests now lie with the political processes which determine the framework and regulations within which family negotiations and market processes take place. For women, it is also the interdependencies between these different processes..between time allocated to childcare, political involvement and market work. Indeed, half of these women are in part time work compared to male part time work; women still take on greater responsibility for housework and although the opportunity if available to men, women still tend to use parental leave and also days for illness of family. Women also only constitute 29% of Swedish parliament in 1985 (increase of 5% from 1975) and about one third in committees, local government and. Yet again there as a distinct division of labour by sex...into welfare, education and culture.

What Inga Wernersson argues is that this has been informed not by feminist ideology, but rather a general social democratic idea of fairness and social equality'(Wernersson 1989, p. 89) Issues of racial, class and sexual inequality were all treated the same. The assumption that it was men and women against tradition, as men and women would both benefit. The stress was on equal responsibilities as well as equal rights and opportunities. These were derived from both socialist and liberal notions of equal opportunity, as well as behaviourist psychology and Piagetian pedagogical theory. It was also informed by research e.g. the Sex Role Project 1979 (National Board of Education). Yet as many studies have indicated (Jonsson and Arnman 1989, Wernersson 1989), in 1993 there is still a high level of sex segregation in upper secondary schooling, and Sweden's sex segmentation in the workforce is equal to that of Australia in OECD countries. Inga Wernesson sums up the position of gender equality well when she states:

In many respects the issue of gender equality in education in Sweden could be described as 'mysterious' - or maybe just confused. On the one hand there are the radical official goals and the formally equal organisation and on the other hand actual practice in schools, teacher training and educational planning and development which are surprisingly unaffected by the ideological standpoints'(Wernesson 1989, p. 91)

She argues that the linking of radical goals and formal equality as well as the frequent association of gender equality and international understanding in extension courses and curricula has allowed men in decisionmaking to appeal to the rhetoric without taking significant action. Yet such claims of equality have the potential, in specific contexts and with the political will, to produce more fundamental change. What has been lacking is the political will.. What is increasingly clear in education is that gender equality as a goal has not been contested..but at the same time, it has not been challenged as to its meaning.

### Global / local discourses

Why this shift now? In 1983 , Neave and Jenkinson comments , although speaking about higher education, have relevance for all Swedish education. Taken for granted in Sweden , they suggested, but not necessarily elsewhere, is first, the concept of a strong

state; second, the notion of uniformity; third, equality in society; fourth, the positivist , rationalist style of policy-making; and finally, the practical versus the theoretical in higher education.(Neave and Jenkinson 1983) These assumptions all appear to be open now for re-interpretation.

Tomas Englund sees these changes as being significant in terms of a shift in view of education away from a public to a private good. Sweden has maintained a balance between public and private good which arose from a patriarchalist conception, to a tension between scientific rational and democratic since 1945. (Englund 1992) The private good perspective is that parents are seen as having a prior right to choose their children's school or, less consistently, that it is possible to differentiate schooling in relation to the specific needs and wants of families in the community.

Wallin sees that in the context of the reduction in public sector and central collective bargaining and a shift to individualisation and internationalisation requires anew ways of constructing individual freedom. The shift he argues is largely due to a decreased distrust in public education but also a reflection of common trends in Swedish society towards decentralisation and particularisation and a reduced faith in scientific expertise. He sees this as counter to the government expression about maintaining the Swedish democratic ideal which is expressed in a collective sense. The eighties, Englund agrees saw a shift from looking at education as a social collective right to an individual civil right, partially fuelled by the development of alternative pedagogical schools ( Waldorf

schools), a rise in religious fundamentalism and a demand for schools for the talented. The debate initially focused about alternative pedagogies with the hope that this would stimulate change in public education. It was also connected to the belief that it would be better to parents more involved in schools. whilst the social democrats initiated moves towards decentralisation, they disallowed private schools.

Indeed, it was the Swedish 'citizen's committee' of 1991 that called upon the UN notion of parental rights in education in ways which polarised the debate between state monopoly and rights of the family. England argues that within the Swedish tradition, the polarisation could be better conceptualised as between the rights of a child to meet the pluralistic society within a separate schools (public education) where there is a choice between schools, and right for parents to decide upon the socialisation values of their children (private education). This produces different versions of equality. Whereas since 1980 the emphasis has been on equal schooling, which may mean unequal treatment in school, for equality of outcomes, this new discourse appeals to the notions of as now a sphere of justice. Alternative view have emphasised either profiling individuals for their specific needs or profiling schools in order to provide different choices, both versions fitting within the notion of private rather than public schooling.

Another difference in the Swedish system is that the local educational authorities are constituted as representative groups of political parties and not the parents of students in particular schools. This differs from the parent power position, which Amy Guttmann for example sees allows notions of cultural pluralism to flourish, but often it also facilitates parents to teach sexist, racist and classist attitudes in the absence of a wider educational authority (Guttmann 1987).

Third, the positioning of the national curriculum. this has

historically in Sweden since 1962 been seen to be the driving force for a common education. In England, the national curriculum was perceived to be an instrument of undermining the LEA's bit also as a symbol and potential for establishing a common educational system (Whitty 1989). In Australia, the national curriculum of a federal Labor government is highly contested given the education is run by the states.

Finally, England sees the notion of community being established here as supplanting the view of guaranteeing citizenship rights in terms of every citizen having the potential to be active which is based on private citizenship in which individuals are

the focus of action, driven by self interest in a market system rather than any community or collective impulse.

In Sweden, Ulf Lundgren argues that public opinion is formed in ways which allows 'interest groups and persons with access to the media to have an influence that far outweighs the more systematic influence exerted by the citizens via formal institutions like school boards'(Lundgren 1989,p. 202) ' 'The public educational discourse in this sense is an expression of how public political discourse is structured. Research that claims to influence this discourse an even provide the discourse with new distinctions, new descriptions and explanations of educational phenomena and processes must be able to sell its "products" on the "market" '(Lundgren 1989, p, 203).

In a sense , this is a departure from how education has been reformed in the past, and therefore is assumes more the characteristics of a fundamental 'restructuring ' of social, political and economic relationships than merely educational reform. Sweden, therefore, Lundgren suggests is converging toward like solutions because of what he calls 'contextual dependence'. Increasingly the problems as specified by commissions and contemporary political agendas, defined what research questions were, and what the expected product was to look like, ...'the problems specified needed answers that were given within a logical-empirical or positivistic research tradition or scientifically acceptable answers. (Lundgren 1989, p. 198) It ( research)has a rather low level of theoretical development even though there are remarkable exceptions. '(Lundgren 1989, p.202) Lundgren sees a dependent relationship developing between research methodologies, institutionalised. He doesn't see it as merely 'epistemic drift', but that the language within science ( and research) is framed by the public discourse of education in a form of 'contextual dependence'. More recently, this contextual dependence is leading to the 'bureaucratisation of research in its deep sense', as what will be studies is dependent on the discourse about education and the ways in which this discourse is filtered by the educational administration'(Lundgren 1989, p. 203). In this way local discourses draw from global discourses and vice versa.

What is evident is that underlying these perspectives is a view of the internationalisation of educational provision in the context o the EC, and the need to meet the cultural pluralism in a period of post-colonial era. And furthermore, that the nature of governance is altering from bureaucratic forms to ones operating upon the basis of self-governance. As Pettersson, chair of the Swedish Study on Power and Democracy argues:

The growing independence of citizens us making systems based on

external obedience untenable. Instead, institutions aim at internal persuasion, and groups are being held together by discussions and agreements. A system of subordinates and superiors is being replaced by a system of coordination and

cooperation (Pettersson 1991).

Indeed, therefore, Sweden has been colonised by the global discourses by the very notion of the global market and within a framework of international capitalism.

Restructuring and equity:

Despite the relative differences therefore between the historical contexts in which educational and work restructuring are occurring. Changing the role of the state with respect to education has, as argued, implications for notions of citizenship and economic responsibility.

Yeatman sees this as a shift in Australia from a paternalistic model of the state in which women and other disadvantaged groups e.g. Koories, were 'protected' to a view of self government, which unfortunately in the absence of more democratic alternatives, has been framed by a consumer / economic model.

For women, many implications already are clear. Women's reliance upon a protectionist paternalistic welfare state as in Sweden and Australia particularly for welfare, equal opportunity in employment, child care, education and training have created the conditions enabling women's full participation in public life. Yet Persson-Tanimura argues that because women were only seen as one problem in Sweden, and readily associated only with women's activities, it has not attacked fundamental issues. ie it has concentrated on the supply side rather than demand by eliminating discrimination in the workplace. Therefore, there is little affirmative action to get more women into leadership positions as in USA, and a low level of representation of women in decision making bodies, with massive opposition to quotas (Persson-Tanimura 1988. p. 8). { See for example the Commission of Inquiry on Representation, SOU, 1987}. Persson suggests that the lack of upward mobility within organisational hierarchies for women can in part be because generally in Sweden the economic pay-offs for career advancement is relatively small ( progressive tax, reduced wage differentials etc). That the improved status of women in general in terms of public services supplied which are preconditions for women's entrance is unfavourable for advancement of few. She argues that whilst women have increased their time on market work, without any significant change in non-market labour; men have reduced their

time in market work without any significant change in non-market labour.

So whilst women have become permanent features of the market economy, their positioning in that economy and the political decisionmaking is significant, particularly when the state is being reduced or moving into private/public mixes. In particular, women as a higher proportion of contract positions are more vulnerable when economies are demand, although in education there is a law that the last person on, whether tenured or not, is the first person off! Two thirds of women are employed in public sector, two thirds of men in the private. Sweden is even more highly sex segmented labour market than Australia. The dismantling of the welfare state therefore disproportionately impacts upon women. On the one hand, women's largely casualised labour in unsecured work is central to the flexibility of the capitalist economy necessary to increase profits. On the other hand, women's emotional management skills and familial responsibilities are increasingly exploited both within the family as the state withdraws its safety net for unemployed youth, adult males and for the sick, young and aged and at work as they encouraged to enter nontraditional areas of work and

middle management.

Second, new state formations, with the development of the EC causing a levelling effect on the issues of equity. Women's groups in various Nordic states seeing the conditions they had achieved in terms of child care and employment being undermined under male dominated agreements between the various members of the EC. In New Zealand, a school principal talks about how her school is facing the withdrawal of state and local funded services on welfare ( e.g. truancy etc) at the same time truancy is increasing, staff responsibilities are increasing, and school funds for equity programs are reduced (Gordon 1993). In other words, the state is being selective in the areas it wishes to devolve. Equity in particular, has a history of relying upon strong state intervention in terms of EO etc. Therefore, to devolve the responsibility of equity to communities and many uncommitted in which equity may not be high priority, particularly in the context of economic survival and competitiveness, has significant implications.

Third, the emphasis on the restructuring and formation of new blocs is premised upon notions of global markets. Thus social relationships ( cultural/ national) are being overlaid, transformed and supplanted by exchange relationships in a market-system. There is ample evidence that the market does not produce equity, and that some have more capacities to make choices than

others. This is most evident in the gender gaps in wages in comparable work, the highly gendered segmentation of labour and gender biased notions of merit, indicating how the market does not favour women.

Fourth, does the shift to self managing schools indeed constitute the 'death of middle management' at the very time that women are being encouraged or have made significant inroads into educational leadership? Now that the human and capital resource management is based at the level of the school, with information technology systems supposedly linking schools to the centre in a management loop of information -feedback and with school leadership ( or as they call it in the USA, building or site based management) being reconceptualised in effective school literature as being a facilitator, a motivator and an entrepreneur who shares power and decisionmaking with the 'stakeholders' at the local level.

Fifth, whilst the rhetoric of devolution calls upon democratic notions of participation , in the current context, seemingly participatory processes and bodies are readily co-opted and incorporate dominant discourses and therefore can have relatively conservative outcomes. Studies in the USA and Australia indicate that participation alone does not provide a democratic environment or outcome. Many seemingly democratic processes and structures exclude or marginalise groups ( e.g. women, lower socioeconomic or non-Anglo Celtic parents) which lack of the cultural capital of the dominant stakeholders representatives ( principals, administrators and teachers), usually white, middle class and male. Global (bureaucratic, national ) discourses regarding the need for fiscal economy and cutbacks in education become givens in local contexts. School based committees can be even more rigorous in meeting budgetary demands when unaware of the full educational implications. Representation also effectively quietens minority or oppositional discourses because their notional involvement implies agreement and commitment to the procedures and decisions(Anderson and Dixon 1993, Blackmore 1991). Johnson also points out that many of the popular resistances in England

have conservative imperatives and outcomes.

And of course there are the students. There is little in the management literature or research on devolution about how student achievement will improve under this new relationship. In the USA, for example, where decentralisation was initiated in the early 1970s, research findings on how this effected student achievement are ambiguous(Wissler and Ortiz 1986). Indeed, Ball's work in

England and the research in the USA indicate that competitive market orientation in education exacerbates social inequality based on gender, race and class and favour higher income families. The self managing school is premised upon the notion of individual choice of parent being the best way of selecting a child's school. It assumes parents have the resources ( information, material, educational) to make those choices. More importantly, English studies indicate that it is schools making choices about students . That is, schools select not to have particular types of children in order to maintain a particular public image which attracts a particular clientele. Increasingly studies indicate a large number of students in England who are not placed in any of their neighbourhood schools. And finally, again from the English experience, successful( in the narrow academic sense ) schools in competing for clients are prepared to utilise League tables to indicate how they rate relative to each other. This ranking, usually based on standardised testing scores which favour middle class white male students, serves to perpetuate images of what constitutes 'good school' , images which have little to do with how individual schools meet the demand of their particular set of students.

Yeatman sees a number of challenges First, that we need to produce a better version of mode of self governance that addresses issues of community and citizenship. And second, she sees there are new democratic demands in what she calls the post-colonial era which must be met by this new version of citizenship. A post-colonial democracy requires that the political community be multiracial and multi-cultural. This requires us therefore to think closely about how we are to address these elements of and work for developing communities for new times

she also talks about the capacities of women as change agents, of how they, positioned as they are as marginal and in some sense insiders/ outsiders when they are in positions of management, serve to become significant change agents. Richard Johnson makes a similar point when he argues that we not merely reassert the value of what went before in public education. Rather we need to search for a long term alternative that, in England, is certainly post-Thatcher.

At another level, teachers and parents themselves were initiators of the grass roots movement in Victoria for school based decisionmaking. There are learnings from that experience which could be drawn upon. Certainly, parents in Victoria have learnt well the lesson of subversion and regaining control of their version of community with over 300 day of occupation of schools closed in December 1992.

At the same time, much has to do with the context in which certain politics are feasible. Certainly in Victoria, teachers

and parents are concerned with the survival of their jobs and, ironically, their local community schools.

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